ADVENT

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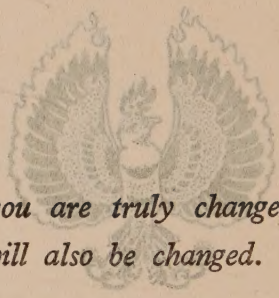

When you are truly changed, everything around you will also be changed.

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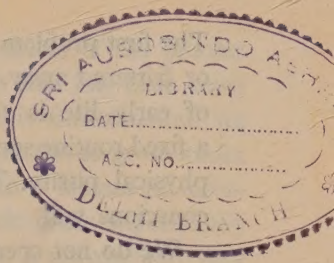
Thy spirit's fate is a battle and ceaseless march
From Matter into a greater Life and Mind,
Armed traveller to the unseen supernal heights,
Against invisible opponent hosts
Across the dust and mire of the earthly plain.

SAVITRI, BOOK VI, CANTO 2

by Krishnalal

The Ashram Interior

Vol. VI. No. 4 November 1949



THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIAL

BRAHMACHARYA

BRAHMACHARYA means the storage of energy in the body and its sublimation. The energy in view is mainly physico-vital energy, the vital energy based upon and embedded in the physical body. Brahmacharya naturally meant a strict observance of certain rules and regulations involving a strenuous discipline.

Brahmacharya was the very basis of education in ancient India: indeed it was the basic education upon which Indian culture, Indian civilisation, Indian life was based and built up. Without it there was no entry into the business of life.

Modern education means storage of information, knowledge of things—as much knowledge of as many things as it is possible for the brain to contain. The older ideal, however, was, not so much knowledge, that is to say, packet of knowings, but capacity, first capacity in a general way and then, as its application, the capacity of knowledge. The problem was to locate, that is to say, find out the source of energy, then master it, increase it, harness and utilise it. The physico-vital energy is the most elementary and elemental energy that is nearest to us and most easily available. It is the basic energy; man starts his life with that, a child possesses it abundantly.

The first problem is how to store it; evidently it is most liable to be thrown or frittered away. The first form of the discipline in the preparatory stage of early life is regularity in habits, methodical physical exercises; even a fixed routine sometimes helps much. Next comes self-control, continence, physical purity. This is Brahmacharya proper. It means the exercise of conscious will.

We do not speak of Brahmacharya in relation to a child. The discipline can be taken up only when the body and the consciousness have attained a certain degree of growth and development. A child grows in the full free play of its life movements: the care or attention of others should weigh upon it as lightly as possible, maintaining only an atmosphere of happy influence and protection. The transition from the stage of free play to conscious control is marked in Indian society by the ceremony of *Upanayana*, the first approach or initiation: it is the beginning of the life of Brahmacharya.

It must be understood that this discipline is not merely for those who wish to follow a religious or spiritual life, but for all without exception. Brahmacharya is the first *ashrama*, order or stage of life with which one begins one's organisation of life; one has to pass through it to others leading to greater and higher degrees of fulfilment. It forms the foundation, prepares the necessary ground upon which the life structure can safely be raised and maintained. It is the secret fund of strength, the source of pure energies that vitalises life, enhances its values, makes it worth living.

The energy that one stores by continence, regular habits and self-discipline increases also in that way. Sometimes special methods—*kriya*—are adopted to help the process, Asana or Pranayama, for example. But an inner and a more psychological procedure is needed, a concentration of will and consciousness—a kind of *dhyana*, in other words—in order to be able to take the next step in the discipline. For after the storage and increase of energy comes the sublimation of energy, that is to say, the physico-vital energy transmuted into the energy of mental substance, *medha*. Sublimation means also the increase of brain-power, an enhancement in the degree and quality of its capacity. This has nothing to do with the volume of knowledge enclosed (the mass of information to which we referred before); the growth is with regard to the very stuff of the mind from within, the natural strength of intelligence that can be applied to any field of knowledge with equal success and felicity.

The basis and the immediate aim of education according to the ancient system was to develop this fundamental mental capacity: the brain's power to think clearly, consistently and deeply, to undergo labour without tiring easily and also a general strength and steadiness in the nerves. The trans-

ference of nervous energy into brain energy is also a secret of the process of sublimation. It is precisely this aspect of education that has been most neglected in modern times. We give no thought to this fundamental: we leave the brain to develop as it may (or may not), it is made to grow under pressure—more to inflate than to grow—by forcing into it masses of information. The result at best is that it is sharpened, made acute superficially or is overgrown in a certain portion of it in respect of a narrow and very specialised function, losing thereby a healthy harmony and homogeneity in the total movement. The intellectual's nervous instability is a very common phenomenon among us.

In recent times, however, we have begun to view children's education in a different light. It is being more and more realised that things are not to be instilled into the child from outside, but that the child should be allowed to grow and imbibe naturally. The teacher is only a companion and a guide: he is to let the child move according to its own inclinations, follow its own line of curiosity; he can open up and present new vistas of curiosity, seek to evoke new interests. Sympathy and encouragement on his side, giving scope to freedom and autonomous development for the child—this is the watchword and motto for the ideal teacher.

This new approach has rectified much of the wrong handling of the problem of education to which we have been accustomed. Even this new orientation, however, is not sufficient: along with freedom and autonomy, the element of discipline and order has also to be brought in, if not quite in the old way, at least in a new manner. It will not do to say simply that it must be self-discipline and self-order, but the question is how it is to be practically carried out. In ancient times it was done by living the life of an aspirant—not merely by studying and going to school, being only a student—but living in the house of the Teacher, in the atmosphere of his direct presence and influence: the teacher too was not a machine issuing mechanical instructions, but a Person who loved and whom one loved, a warm embodiment of the ideal.

In our days there has been this unhappy division between the student and the aspirant. In the student life, life and study are things apart. One may be a good student, study very seriously and attain considerable eminence in intellectual achievement, and yet in life one may remain quite the ordinary man with very normal reactions. Along with the brain we do not endeavour to educate the life instincts and body impulses. This portion of our nature we leave all alone and do not dare or care to handle it consciously. Sometimes we call that freedom; but it is more slavery than freedom, slavery to our commonplace animal nature. Because one

follows one's impulses and instincts freely, without let or hindrance, one feels as if he were free. Far from it.

This hiatus in our nature, the separation between intellectual culture and life movement has to be healed up; human personality must be made a unified whole. The training given under Brahmacharya will be of immense help in that direction. The deeper purpose, however, of this discipline is not merely a unification of the personality, but a heightening also, lifting it on to a level of consciousness from where it can envisage its spiritual destiny and seek to realise it.

"AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE"

Ibsen's famous drama portrays a noble soul who tried to do good to the ignorant people of his country, but was hounded out by them as "An Enemy of the People." The spectacle is not rare or unfamiliar. If you fall in with the passions and prejudices of the people and work along the line of least resistances, moving with the current, you are comparatively safe. But it becomes dangerous if you wish to do real good, try seriously to cure the people of their ignorance and superstition. Reformers are always looked upon with suspicion. And the greater the degree of reform you seek to undertake, the greater your danger and chance of failure. Religious preachers, spiritual teachers who envisage radical remedies have always had a very bad time of it. There is a famous Indian painting which depicts the scene of a Buddhist shrine set on fire by the people, the last living monk prone at the feet of the image of Buddha being consumed by the fires all around. One can also recall how an associate and disciple of Chaitanya was struck by a missile, how Chaitanya himself was made an accused and hauled before a court of Justice, how St. Stephen was stoned to death. Naturally, we cannot forget in this connection the names of Socrates, Jesus Christ and Jeanne d'Arc. In many of these cases popular feelings of antipathy and conspiracy of a clique (political or religious) are mixed up and the share of mischief is difficult to apportion, but the main fact remains the same, the common and the old protesting against the rare and the new.

The normal consciousness of ordinary men is steeped in ignorance, their life is built out of ignorance. Any light thrown upon it acts as an uncomfortable irritant: it abrogates the wholesome littleness of life. The call of wideness, freedom, otherwhere means a tension which they cannot easily stand. When they come face to face with movements other than the familiar, they deny them as unnatural and dangerous. A popular

complaint against God is that he is hiding, does not appear when called and even when called intently and earnestly by many. Only, men do not realise that if God were to manifest, he would manifest in his godly nature, which means qualities and virtues and modes of action foreign and even contrary to our ordinary normal human movements. There will be no point of contact. To Arjuna was given the vision for a moment and mighty hero though he was, he began to quake and quail and implored the vision to be taken away and a more normal view given to him instead. Or otherwise, if the Divine is not so forbidding and appears nearer to normal humanity, people rise in anger and threaten him, chase him and seek to destroy him.

And yet it will not be true to say that people, ordinary people in the mass, are not moved or touched by things high and divine. Religious movements themselves are often mass movements. Fanatic faith, urge for conversion spread also like wild fire. As there are elements against the ideal, there are always ardent adherents too, starting with a few, but growing soon enough into a strong minority and finally influencing and swaying general masses. The normal history of religions—Christianity, Mahomedanism or Buddhism —is there to testify to the ease with which the populace accept belief in God and try to follow his dispensation.

How can it be said then that humanity is naturally or intrinsically anti-divine or anti-idealistic? Two things are to be distinguished here. First, if humanity had not a divine or higher element in it, it would not have existed or continued to exist till now or thrown up these surges of reformation ever and always. What is, however, true is that that element lies very much embedded underground, and it takes the grace of an Avatar, the might of a Vibhuti, the sacrifice of a God-man to bring that to the fore —the sacrifice and suffering seem to be the inevitable price and ransom, but at the same time the most potent agent. Secondly, the ordinary enthusiasm, even or precisely the fanaticism, created among masses in favour of an ideal cannot always be regarded as the right movement or condition for the true fulfilment or permanent establishment of the ideal. We have only to remember the march and fate of the Nazi and Bolshevic movements. Especially, a spiritual ideal which aims at the change of man's nature and consciousness is not helped, in the end at least, by such mass adhesions. For they bring into play exactly those elements that have to be eliminated or in a large measure replaced and purified. The blind passion for a religion and the blind passion against belong to the same category and have the same quality, *tamo-rajasic*.

This is exactly the reason why religions deteriorate soon; rarely they survive in their purity the passing away of the founder. It is because

of this that in social movements too there is always a counter movement following an upward idealistic movement, a slide of reaction and backwardness. This is the inevitable inescapable dialectic so much made of by Hegel and his spiritual disciple Marx, that is to say, a see-saw movement of action and reaction, of "thesis and antithesis". The real synthesis has never been arrived at, because human consciousness has never risen beyond the dualities. To rise above duality is the aim of true spiritual endeavour.

The real difficulty that faces a spiritual movement lies then here. It cannot and should not secure its support in and through the ordinary inferior nature of man. Man has to be carefully and rigorously taught to know and love and embrace the Ideal through his inmost being, his highest and purest consciousness; and when he has done that, when he has found a sufficiently secure seat there, then only lean down and yoke his lower elements to that Inly Control, so that, first, these may be purified of their dross and then put themselves at the service of the Spirit as its means for expression and embodiment on earth. This involves a process and a discipline which men in the mass cannot be expected to undergo: it is only individuals or small groups that can successfully practise and attain the transformation. The larger result will follow, but only as an extension and harmonisation of these nuclear growths.

The Enemy is within and he has to be fought out first there, even as the Kingdom of Heaven is within and has to be established first there.

THE DIVINE AS HUMAN

The common man asks and wonders if God is all-powerful why he does not cure the ills of suffering humanity at a stroke, especially, when one turns to him and prays earnestly and sincerely. Even the wise are often puzzled and do not understand why it is so or why it should be so. The Upanishadic parable tells us indeed that the creation did not bring out the perfect form all on a sudden, that it had to be slowly evolved, preceded by a lot of incomplete and tentative forms. According to these Rishis, at least, it was not all a matter of "let there be light and there was light".

God has denied himself by consenting to become the physical world: Spirit has negated itself by assuming a material body. This is the first part of God's labour. The second part is that he has to uplift the world into himself, that the material body be made a concrete vehicle of the Spirit: and this means a long travail, a drawn-out battle, a slow process.

If God's will got immediately fulfilled, then there would be no point or meaning in his creation. He might as well not have willed it at all. The fact is that the Divine Consciousness started its work in the physical with Matter as its material and basis, that is to say, with something absolutely unconscious, at least, apparently so. Transformation of Matter: this is the problem and the process which is being worked out by Nature as instrument of the Divine Consciousness—in other words, the transformation of Matter into spirit, of unconsciousness into consciousness. We know how Matter is transmuted through the process called evolution: Matter becomes or is married to life, life becomes or is married to mind, and mind now has to become, be sublimated into the super-mental or spirit consciousness.

Now, what is there in the macrocosm is repeated in the microcosm: the human vehicle too in its individual nature undergoes a similar transformation. From humanity to divinity there is a process of growth, development and sublimation. In that process God himself becomes a mortal being to show how the transformation is done, how flesh becomes spirit. He is the symbol and pattern of the transformation that is being effected. Flesh cannot say that it cannot turn into spirit, unconsciousness cannot remain ever bound to its original nature. For here is the Divine Exemplar who is doing that miracle—for you and me and all, for everyone who wishes to follow.

He not only displays the plan, he is not merely the blue-print of what is to be done for you. He is the Power that helps you in carrying out your plan. Being the Divine, he is the cosmic force immanent within each one of us as the Inner Guide and Master: even when we fail or falter, that force is there to uphold us, put us back again on the road. The Buddha, no doubt, declared that each one has to be his own light and work out his own salvation. Each one has to rediscover the path and go over the whole length again all alone. The Buddha is only a beacon, a hope and an encouragement that such a thing has been done and can be done. The Christian (and the Vaishnava) goes to the opposite extreme and says you can do nothing and have to do nothing, it is God's Grace that alone gives you salvation. What you can do is to recognise your sin and pray. God takes upon himself your burden and frees you from the consequences of your sinfulness (Karma).

The Divine becomes human, assumes all earthly limitations. He lives and acts apparently as an ordinary man with the ordinary man's apparatus at his disposal. And yet into that domain gradually and constantly—even suddenly at times when necessary—he brings a transfiguring energy and pressure that change the normal course and balance of forces, create new elements and factors that build up a purified and uplifted nature. He thus

becomes the "leader of evolution". He accepts human doubts and hesitations, stumblings and weaknesses so that working through them he can set up the abiding strength and certitude. He is, as it were, the crucible in which all the dross is melted and sublimated and the purest gold brought out. Realisations and truths that are far and out of reach he brings nearer to humanity, places them within earth's atmosphere, makes them part of the earth-consciousness so that whoever is sincerely willing has only to stretch his hand in order to seize and possess them. That is the cosmic effect of God's descent into human ignorance and earthly inconscience.

The Divine in the human body is thus, first of all, an object lesson, as it were. He shows by his example how starting from the normal human nature it is made super-normal. In the second place, he himself brings down and creates for us the light and force that conquer and achieve. In the third place, he stands and helps not only for the individual progress, but he is carrying forward the whole humanity, even the whole creation to a higher and higher fulfilment.

Men expect and await miracles from the Divine, that is to say, there must be sudden revelations, swift reversals, lightning conversions and the like. Christ was supposed to have done many things of that kind. And sometimes the degree of saintliness of a saint is measured by the amount of unnaturalness in his miracles. But God need not show his omnipotence in that way only. Greater omnipotence he shows by the miracles he does daily and hourly, every moment behind the scene, outside the gaze of the blind normal man. What else is it if not a miracle of miracles when a little of God's love glistens in the eye of man, when a ray of light from elsewhere suddenly throbs the mortal heart?

Savitri

BOOK VII

THE BOOK OF ETERNAL NIGHT

CANTO I

THE SOUL'S JOURNEY INTO THE VOID

SO was she left alone in the huge wood,
Surrounded by a dim unthinking world,
Her husband's corpse on her forsaken breast.
She measured not her loss with helpless thoughts,
Nor rent with tears the marble seals of pain:
She rose not yet to face the dreadful god.
Over the body she loved her soul leaned out
In a great stillness without stir or voice,
As if her mind had died with Satyavan.
But still the human heart in her beat on.
Aware still of his being near to hers,
Closely she clasped to her the mute lifeless form
As though to guard the oneness they had been
And keep the spirit still within the frame.
Then suddenly there came on her the change
Which in tremendous moments of our lives
Can overtake sometimes the human soul
And hold it up towards its luminous source.
The veil is torn, the thinker is no more:
Only the spirit sees and all is known.
Then a calm Power seated above our brows
Is seen, unshaken by our thoughts and deeds,
Its stillness bears the voices of the world:
Immobile, it moves Nature, looks on life.
It shapes immutably its far-seen ends;
Untouched and tranquil amid error and tears
And measureless above our striving wills,
Its gaze controls the turbulent whirl of things.
To mate with the Glory it sees, the spirit grows:
The voice of life is tuned to infinite sounds,

The moments on great wings of lightning come
And godlike thoughts surprise the mind of earth.
Into the soul's splendour and intensity
A crescent of miraculous birth is tossed,
Whose horn of mystery floats in a bright void
As into a heaven of strength and silence, thought
Is ravished; all this living mortal clay
Is seized and in a swift and fiery flood
Of touches shaped by a Harmonist unseen.
A new sight comes, new voices in us form,
A body of the music of the gods.
Immortal yearnings without name leap down,
Large quiverings of godhead seeking run
And weave upon a puissant field of calm
A high and lonely ecstasy of will.
This in a moment's depths was born in her.
Now to the limitless gaze disclosed that sees
Things barred from human thinking's earthly lids,
The Spirit who had hidden in nature soared
Out of his luminous nest within the worlds.
Like a vast fire it climbed the skies of night.
Thus were the cords of self-oblivion torn.
Like one who looks up to far heights she saw,
Ancient and strong as on a windless summit
Above her where she had worked in her lone mind
Labouring apart in a sole tower of self,
The source of all which she had seemed or wrought,
A power projected into cosmic space,
A slow embodiment of the aeonic will,
A starry fragment of the eternal Truth,
The passionate instrument of an unmoved Power.
A Presence was there that filled the listening world,
A central All assumed her boundless life.
A sovereignty, a silence and a swiftness,
One brooded over abysses who was she.
As in a choric robe of unheard sounds
A force descended trailing endless lights;
Linking Time's seconds to Infinity,
Illimitably it girt the earth and her:
It sank into her soul and she was changed.

Then like a thought fulfilled by some great word
That mightiness assumed a symbol form;
Her being's spaces quivered with its touch,
It covered her as with immortal wings;
On its lips the curve of the unuttered Truth,
A halo of Wisdom's lightnings for its crown,
It entered the mystic lotus in her head,
A thousand-petalled home of power and light.
Immortal leader of her mortality,
Doer of her works and fountain of her words,
Invulnerable by Time, omnipotent,
It stood above her calm, immobile, mute.

All in her mated with that mighty hour,
As if the last remnant had been slain by Death
Of the humanity that once was hers.
Assuming a spiritual wide control,
Making life's sea a mirror of heaven's sky,
The young divinity in her earthly limbs
Filled with celestial strength her mortal part.
Over was the haunted pain, the rending fear:
Her grief had passed away, her mind was still,
Her heart beat quietly with a sovereign force.
There came a freedom from the heart-strings' clutch,
Now all her acts sprang from a godhead's calm.
Calmly she laid upon the forest soil
The dead who still reposed upon her breast
And bore to turn away from the dead form:
Sole now she rose to meet the dreadful god.
That mightier spirit turned its mastering gaze
On life and things, inheritor of a work
Left to it unfinished from her halting past,
When yet the mind a passionate learner toiled
And ill-shaped instruments were crudely moved.
Transcended now was the poor human rule;
A sovereign power was there, a godlike will.
A moment yet she lingered motionless
And looked down on the dead man at her feet;
Then like a tree recovering from a wind
She raised her noble head; fronting her gaze

Something stood there, unearthly, sombre, grand,
A limitless denial of all being
That wore the terror and wonder of a shape.
In its appalling eyes the tenebrous Form
Bore the deep pity of destroying gods.
A sorrowful irony curved the dreadful lips
That speak the word of doom. Eternal Night
In the dire beauty of an immortal face
Pitying arose, receiving all that lives
For ever into its fathomless heart, refuge
Of creatures from their anguish and world-pain.
His shape was nothingness made real, his limbs
Were monuments of transience and beneath
Brows of unwearying calm large godlike lids
Silent beheld the writhing serpent, life.
Unmoved their timeless wide unchanging gaze
Had seen the unprofitable cycles pass,
Survived the passing of unnumbered stars
And sheltered still the same immutable orbs.
The two opposed each other with their eyes,
Woman and universal god: around her,
Piling their void unbearable loneliness
Upon her mighty uncompanioned soul,
Many inhuman solitudes came close.
Vacant eternities forbidding hope
Laid upon her their huge and lifeless look,
And to her ears silencing earthly sounds,
A sad and formidable voice arose
Which seemed the whole adverse world's. "Unclasp", it cried,
"Thy passionate influence and relax, O slave
Of Nature, changing tool of changeless Law,
Who vainly writhst rebellion to my yoke,
Thy elemental grasp; weep and forget.
Entomb thy passion in its living grave.
Leave now the once-loved spirit's abandoned robe:
Pass lonely back to thy vain life on earth."
It ceased, she moved not and it spoke again,
Lowering its mighty key to human chords,—
Yet a dread cry behind the uttered sounds,
Echoing all sadness and immortal scorn,

Moaned like a hunger of far wandering waves.
"Wilt thou for ever keep thy passionate hold,
Thyself, a creature doomed like him to pass,
Denying his soul death's calm and silent rest?
Relax thy grasp; this body is earth's and thine,
His spirit now belongs to a greater power.
Woman, thy husband suffers." Savitri
Drew back her heart's force that clasped his body still
Where from her lap renounced on the smooth grass
Softly it lay, as often before in sleep
When from their couch she rose in the white dawn
Called by her daily tasks: now too as if called
She rose and stood gathered in lonely strength,
Like one who drops his mantle for a race
And waits the signal, motionlessly swift.
She knew not to what course: her spirit above
On the crypt-summit of her secret form
Like one left sentinel on a mountain crest.
A fiery-footed splendour puissant-winged
Watched flaming-silent with her voiceless soul
Like a still sail upon a windless sea.
White passionless it rode, an anchored might,
Waiting what far-ridged impulse should arise
Out of the eternal depths and cast its surge.
Then Death the king leaned boundless down, as leans
Night over tired lands when evening pales
And fading gleams break down the horizon's walls,
Nor yet the dusk grows mystic with the moon.
The dim and awful godhead rose erect
From his brief stooping to his touch on earth,
And like a dream that wakes out of a dream,
Forsaking the poor mould of that dead clay,
Another luminous Satyavan arose,
Starting upright from the recumbent earth
As if someone over viewless borders stepped
Emerging on the edge of unseen worlds.
In the earth's day the silent marvel stood
Between the mortal woman and the god.
Such seemed he as if one departed came
Wearing the light of a celestial shape

Splendidly alien to the mortal air.
The mind sought things long loved and fell back foiled
From unfamiliar hues, beheld yet longed,
By the sweet radiant form unsatisfied,
Incredulous of its too bright hints of heaven;
Too strange the brilliant phantasm to life's clasp
Desiring the warm creations of the earth
Reared in the ardour of material suns,
The senses seized in vain a glorious shade.
Only the spirit knew the spirit still,
And the heart divined the old loved heart, though changed.
Between two realms he stood, not wavering,
But fixed in quiet strong expectancy,
Like one who, sightless, listens for a command.
So were they immobile on that earthly field,
Powers not of earth, though one in human clay.
On either side of one two spirits strove;
Silence battled with silence, vast with vast.
But now the impulse of the Path was felt
Moving from the Silence that supports the stars
To touch the confines of the visible world.
Luminous he moved away; behind him Death
Went slowly with his noiseless tread, as seen
In dream-built fields a shadowy herdsman glides
Behind some wanderer from his voiceless herds,
And Savitri moved behind eternal Death,
Her mortal pace was equalled with the god's.
Wordless she travelled in her lover's steps,
Planting her human feet where his had trod,
Into the perilous silences beyond.

At first in a blind stress of woods she moved
With strange inhuman paces on the soil,
Journeying as if upon an unseen road.
Around her on the green and imaged earth
The flickering screen of forests ringed her steps;
Its thick luxurious obstacle of boughs
Besieged her body pressing dimly through
In a rich realm of whispers palpable,
And all the murmurous beauty of the leaves

Rippled around her like an emerald robe.
But more and more this grew an alien sound,
And her old intimate body seemed to her
A burden which her being remotely bore.
Herself lived far in some uplifted scene
Where to the trance-chained vision of pursuit,
Sole presences in a high spaceless dream,
The luminous spirit glided stilly on
And the great shadow travelled vague behind.
Still with an amorous crowd of seeking hands
Softly entreated by their old desires
Her senses felt earth's close and gentle air
Cling round them and in troubled branches knew
Uncertain treadings of a faint-foot wind:
She bore dim fragrances, far callings touched;
The wild bird's voice and its winged rustle came
As if a sigh from some forgotten world.
Earth stood aloof, yet near: round her it wove
Its sweetness and its greenness and delight,
Its brilliance suave of well-loved vivid hues,
Sunlight arriving to its golden noon,
And the blue heavens and the caressing soil.
The ancient mother offered to her child
Her simple world of kind familiar things.
But now as if the body's sensuous hold
Curbing the godhead of her infinite walk
Had freed those spirits to their grander road
Across some boundary's intangible bar,
The silent god grew mighty and remote
In other spaces and the soul she loved
Lost its consenting nearness to her life.
Into a deep and unfamiliar air
Enormous, windless, without stir or sound
They seemed to enlarge away, drawn by some wide
Pale distance, from the warm control of earth
And her grown far. Now, now they would escape.
Then flaming from her body's nest alarmed
Her violent spirit soared at Satyavan.
Out mid the plunge of heaven-surrounded rocks
So in a terror and a wrath divine

From her eyrie streams, against the ascending death,
Indignant at its crouching point of steel,
Fierce she-eagle threatened in her brood,
Borne on a rush of puissance and a cry
Outwinging like a mass of golden fire.
So on a spirit's flaming outrush borne
She crossed the borders of dividing sense;
Like pale discarded sheaths dropped dully down
Her mortal members fell back from her soul.
A moment of a secret body's sleep,
Her trance knew not of sun or earth or world;
Thought, time and death were absent from her grasp:
She knew not self, forgotten was Savitri.
All was the violent ocean of a will
Where lived captive to an immense caress,
Possessed in a supreme identity,
Her aim, joy, origin, Satyavan alone.
Her sovereign prisoned in her being's core
He beat there like a rhythmic heart,—herself
But different still, one loved, enveloped, clasped,
A treasure saved from the collapse of space.
Around him nameless, infinite she surged,
Her spirit fulfilled in his spirit, rich with all Time,
As if Love's deathless moment had been found,
A pearl within eternity's white shell.
Then out of the engulfing sea of trance
Her mind rose drenched to light streaming with hues
Of vision and, awake once more to Time,
Returned to shape the lineaments of things
And live in borders of the seen and known.
Onward the three still moved in her soul-scene.
As if pacing through fragments of a dream,
She seemed to travel on, a visioned shape
Imagining other musers like herself,
By them imagined in their lonely sleep.
Ungrasped, unreal, yet familiar, old,
Like clefts of unsubstantial memory,
Scenes often traversed, never lived in, fled
Past her unheeding to forgotten goals.
In voiceless regions they were travellers

Alone in a new world where souls were not,
But only living moods. A strange, hushed, weird
Country was round them, strange far skies above,
A doubting space where dreaming objects lived
Within themselves their own unchanged idea.
Weird were the grasses, weird the treeless plains,
Weird ran the road which like fear hastening
Towards that of which it has most terror, passed
Phantasmal between pillared conscious rocks
Sombre and high, gates brooding, whose stone thoughts
Lost their huge sense beyond in giant night.
Enigma of the Inconscient's sculptural sleep,
Symbols of the approach to darkness old
And monuments of her titanic reign
Opening to depths like dumb appalling jaws
That wait a traveller down a haunted path
Attracted to a mystery that slays,
They watched across her road, cruel and still;
Sentinels they stood of dumb Necessity,
Mute heads of vigilant and sullen gloom,
Carved muzzle of a dim enormous world.
Then to that chill sere heavy line arrived
Where his feet touched the shadowy marches' brink,
Turning arrested luminous Satyavan
Looked back with his wonderful eyes at Savitri.
But Death pealed forth his vast abysmal cry:
"O mortal, turn back to thy transient kind;
Aspire not to accompany Death to his home,
As if thy breath could live where Time must die.
Think not thy mind-born passion strength from heaven
To uplift thy spirit from its earthly base
And, breaking out from the material cage,
To upbuoy thy feet of dream in groundless Nought
And bear thee through the pathless infinite.
Only in human limits man lives safe.
Trust not in the unreal Lords of Time,
Immortal deeming this image of thyself
Which they have built on a Dream's floating ground.
Let not the dreadful goddess move thy soul
To enlarge thy vehement trespass into worlds

Where it shall perish like a helpless thought.
Know the cold term-stones of thy hopes in life.
Armed vainly with the Idea's borrowed might
Dare not to outstep man's bound and measured force.
Ignorant and stumbling, in brief boundaries pent
He crowns himself the world's mock sovereign
Tormenting Nature with the works of Mind.
O sleeper dreaming of divinity,
Wake trembling mid the indifferent silences
In which thy few weak chords of being die.
Impermanent creatures, sorrowful foam of Time,
Your transient loves bind not the eternal gods."
The dread voice ebbed in the consenting hush
Which seemed to close upon it, wide, intense,
A wordless sanction from the jaws of Night.
The Woman answered not. Her high nude soul,
Stripped of the girdle of mortality,
Against fixed destiny and the grooves of law
Stood up in its sheer will a primal force.
Still like a statue on its pedestal,
Lone in the silence and to vastness bared,
Against midnight's dumb abysses piled in front
A columned shaft of fire and light she rose.

END OF CANTO ONE

Sri Aurobindo

SRI AUROBINDO

THE appreciation of greatness by us adds nothing to it, on the contrary it is only a proof of our ability to appreciate. To be open and clear in our understanding, to have the proper sense of values, to be attracted by the compelling force of greatness, all this does credit to us instead of increasing the lustre of one who is great. If in addition to appreciating greatness, we—following the precept of Sri Krishna in the Gita, recognise that behind all forms of it is the power of the Divine, gratitude is the only natural sentiment that we should feel. And when we come face to face with such extraordinary greatness as is directly a manifestation of the divine Wisdom, Power and Sweetness, there is every reason to be filled with wonder and to be supremely grateful. For gratitude cleanses the heart, prepares the aspirant for the steep and arduous ascent to the peaks of Truth. If we would climb the Himalayas of the Soul, we must free ourselves of the burden of our unregenerate nature, and to pay homage to the great ones is one of the potent means of achieving that purpose. This brief article is written as a tribute to Sri Aurobindo on the occasion of the anniversary of his *siddhi* which falls in this month.

To many even in India Sri Aurobindo is a mystery. Many have great appreciation for his genius, others genuine admiration for his brief but powerful and pioneer political work and leadership. But very few know, far less understand, what he is doing now. There is a negligible minority which thinks that Sri Aurobindo's life has been valueless. But much attention need not be paid to this class of detractors because a statesman whom the great journalist Henry Nevinson considered the wisest among India's political leaders, a poet whom the poet-critic James Cousins has welcomed as a new voice in English poetry successfully blending the mysticism of the East with the vigour of the West, a metaphysical writer whose work 'The Life Divine' was admired by Sir Francis Younghusband as the greatest book produced in his times, a prophet who was hailed by Romain Rolland as the greatest synthesis of the genius of the East and the genius of the West that has been realised to this day, a seer to whom Rabindranath Tagore said that the country was waiting to hear the word from him and through whom the poet expected India would speak to the world: 'Hearken unto me', a Teacher in whose teaching thousands of weary souls all over the world are

finding their way to dynamic self-discovery,—such a person can be summarily rejected only by people who have colossal ignorance of the right political, cultural and spiritual values.

But those who admire and revere Sri Aurobindo may be interested to know that the Master is seeking to evolve a new principle and power of life in the world through the instrumentality of which 'Heaven would grow native in mortal soil'. There is increasing recognition of the dismal fact that inspite of Browning's robust optimism all is not well with the world. Thinkers and poets, artists and scientists, even politicians and pundits of Economics, are at a loss to know where lies the way out of the mad-house that the world is today. All kinds of avenues are being suggested —economic, political, educational, and cultural,—but none seems to be the right one. Sri Aurobindo says that while these external efforts have to be made because the total perfection of man should and will include the realisation of these values, the true way lies somewhere else. Having the yogic view of the world and life, he considers that something is basically wrong with the very constitution of our consciousness. What is fundamentally responsible for the confusion and turmoil in the world is ourselves. We change, the world also changes, we transform ourselves, life in the world is also transformed. Sri Aurobindo traces the present nature of our life to its leadership by mental knowledge and energy. But mental knowledge is another name of ignorance; not being self-conscious, it does not know its origin or its destiny. And since true consciousness is also Force and Power, mental energy is also lame and limping and not sovereign. The mind with its brilliant array of sensory and intellectual powers has not got the key to the mystery of our existence and life. Nor has it got the capacity to fashion it after a harmonious pattern. The reason is that the world is not a manifestation of mental intelligence and energy. "Mind is not sufficient to explain existence in the world", says Sri Aurobindo, "for Mind is that which does not know, which tries to know and never knows except in a glass darkly... It is not the power which knows and guides that existence and therefore it cannot be the power which created or manifested it."[1] The world is in truth, says Sri Aurobindo, a manifestation of the Divine through some faculty of his being which is both perfect knowledge and supreme power. It is only through the overt leadership of this knowledge-will that life in it can be transformed. "The new world whose coming we envisage is not to be made of the same texture as the old and different only in pattern,...it must come by other means, from within and not from

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. I. pp. 178-9.

without."[1] And again, "It is then by a transformation of life in its very principle, not by an external manipulation of its phenomena, that the integral Yoga proposes to change it from a troubled and ignorant into a luminous and harmonious movement of Nature."[2]

It should be noted, however, that the redress of earthly ills is not Sri Aurobindo's prime concern, that his ideal is not humanistic. "My Yoga is not for humanity but for the Divine", he has declared categorically. Sri Aurobindo lives and labours neither for his society, nor for his country, not even for humanity, all his loyalty and love is to and for the Eternal, the Brahman, the Divine. Only, the Divine, as integrally realised by Sri Aurobindo, is the Transcendent Reality which cannot be completely described either negatively or positively. For, as Spinoza said, all determination is negation. For Sri Aurobindo the Divine is the all-embracing, yet all-exceeding Reality, which baffles all attempts at full description. Consequently though Sri Aurobindo accepts all the formulations of Reality given by the different systems of Spiritual Yoga, he does not consider any of them as complete and final. Reality is not only the differenceless Identity but also the constitutive Unity of all apparent differences, not only featureless, quality-less, static and silent Identity-Experience but also the ultimate source, material, ordainer and experiencer of all features, qualities and dynamism. Thus Brahman is One that is always Many, and yet neither One nor Many. For beyond mental man's experience of Reality as one existence, *ekam sat*, is that of *Asat* or *Sunya*, Non-existence or Void. This is the highest realisation that the spiritualised mind of man can attain and the word *Asat* is used because even *Sat*, the ultimate term that the Mind can apply to Reality, seems inapplicable. "The Mind spiritualises itself by shedding all its own activities and formations and reducing everything to a pure Existence, *Sad-Atman*, from which all things and activities proceed and which supports everything. When it wants to go still beyond, it negates yet further and arrives at an *Asat*, which is the negation of all this existence and yet something inconceivable to mind, speech or defining experience."[3] The most famous description of Reality in India is perhaps Sat-Chit-Ananda, the shortest yet the completest positive description. The Chit in this metaphysical formula means Chit-Shakti, Consciousness-Force, the own-Nature of the Divine,[4]

[1] *Messages of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*, pp. 12-13.

[2] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, pp. 156-7.

[3] *Letters of Sri Aurobindo*, Second Series, p. 36.

[4] "Chit is a power not only of Knowledge but also of expressive Will, not only of receptive vision but also of formative representation, the two are indeed one power. For Chit s an

which has become the world and everything in it. The play or sport of Chit-Shakti is Delight or Ananda, from which everything is born. Asat represents the Divine's perfect freedom and dissociation from the play of its self-force, it is the status of Reality even beyond that of Sat and Chit-Shakti, which, however, are only two aspects of the self-same Reality. As Sri Aurobindo the poet has sung of Parabrahman:

> He is, we cannot say; for Nothing too
> Is His conception of Himself unguessed.
> He dawns upon us and we would pursue,
> But who has found Him or what arms possessed?
> ... ...
> Within Himself He shadowed Being forth,
> Which is a younger birth, a veil He chose
> To half-conceal Him, Knowledge, nothing worth
> Save to have glimpses of its mighty cause,
>
> And high Delight, a spirit infinite,
> That is the fountain of this glorious world,
> Delight that labours in its opposite,
> Faints in the rose and on the rack is curled.[1]

Reality is the negation of the play of its force of which it is also the unattached witness and Lord and Master, the Ishwara. Impersonal in itself, Reality is the base and support of the Divine Person and also of all relations of personalities, and though Formless, it yet takes form in everything and the universe itself is an image of the Divine. Non-existence in its highest status means where the idea and experience of Self also vanish, Reality is the eternal assertion of itself as the 'I' or Atman which supports and sanctions the cosmic play. This is how Sri Aurobindo has realised the Divine and it is not possible for the Mind, however much infused with the spiritual light and intuition, to comprehend all these aspects of the Divine because it lacks the integral vision. How can the Divine be all this is realised only by what Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind. For it is the Divine alone who can know him in all his aspects and the Supermind is the Divine's own knowledge of himself. That is why to realise the Divine through the Supermind is the one aim of Sri Aurobindo's integral Yoga.

action of Being, not of the Void. What it sees, that becomes. It sees itself beyond Space and Time, that becomes in the conditions of Space and Time." *Isha Upanishad* by Sri Aurobindo, p. 29.

[1] *Collected Poems and Plays*, Vol. I, pp. 142-3.

But the Supermind is not only the Divine's own knowledge of himself but also his own native power of acting, it is not only Wisdom but also Will. That is why the supramental realisation of the Divine is also simultaneously his revelation. Because the Divine is not only the Unmanifest but also the process and product of manifestation, both beyond and in this world; his integral, that is the supramental, realisation will also reveal him in life in the world. Being absolute knowledge and power the Supermind will change the face of human existence and life in such a radical manner that verily it will be a real transformation. Delight which is the foundation of this glorious world will also be its brick and cement and mortar, and harmonise men in the life divine. "By this Yoga we not only seek the Infinite, but we call upon the Infinite to unfold himself in human life."[1] It is this new life that Sri Aurobindo is seeking, not for himself or for humanity as such, but because the Divine wills it. "It is a higher Truth I seek, whether it makes men greater or not is not the question, but whether it will give them truth and peace and light to live in and make life something better than a struggle with ignorance and falsehood and pain and strife....It is a question between the Divine and myself—whether it is the Divine Will or not, whether I am sent to bring that down or open the way for its descent or at least make it more possible or not."[2]

We have said that the supreme Divine is both the static and the dynamic Brahman. The dynamic Brahman as Consciousness-Force is the divine Maya, the Devi Maya of the Vedas, which measures the Immeasurable, informs the Formless and embodies the Spirit. Through the divine Maya is effected the Divine's self—or de-limitation resulting in his self-variation. The inherent possiblities in the bosom of the Infinite are manifested as multiple centres of himself through de-limitation and self-individualisation. This is the original act of the divine conscious power and mentioned in the Upanishads in the passage: *Eko'ham vahusyām prajāveva*—I am one, I shall be Many for the sake of creation. These centres of the Divine never lose their inherent sense of identity, so that in spite of distinction, there is no discord, in spite of variety there is no exclusion. And the original range of realities where the Divine's self-individualisation starts is the Supermind. This is the real-ideal world, the first product of the loosing forth, *Sriṣṭi*, of Chit-Shakti, which though not the Divine in his absolute self-being, yet retains all the divine qualities like Unity, Knowledge, Power and Love pure and undiminished. Now this world of ours of ignorance and misery

[1] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 6.

[2] *Letters of Sri Aurobindo*, Second Series, pp. 73-4.

is a result of the involution, of progressive self-veiling of the Supermind. The living sense of identity recedes to the background as the self-veiling proceeds till it is lost in Matter or the physical plane of existence and difference becomes the law of life. The Supermind involves itself till through Mind and Life it becomes Matter which is the immediate, but not the ultimate, source of this world and terrestrial life. Clash and conflict is the rule in Matter and Nature red in tooth and claw is its mistress. This is the nature of the world, fundamentally a formation of consciousness, but phenomenally and actually the field of the play of the Mind, Life and Matter, of Manas, Prana and Anna, the field of Ignorance, in which the centres of conscious being shut out the awareness of essential unity and indulge in exclusive self-concentration, each regarding itself as separate from the others, the totality and the essence. All that we suffer is a consequence of this black-out of the consciousness of the identity and unity of our own being and life with the being and life of the cosmos. This is Avidya, the fall of the Mind from Vidya, the Supermind, and proceeds from "the individualised soul viewing everything from its own standpoint and excluding all others; it proceeds, that is to say, by an exclusive self-identification of the soul with a particular temporal and spatial action which is only a part of its own play of being; it starts from the soul's ignoring the fact that all others are also itself, all other action its own action and all other states of being and consciousness equally its own as well as the action of one particular moment of Time and one particular standing-point in Space and the one particular form it presently occupies."[1]

It is true that our world is immediately created by the mental Maya or ignorance. Maya is creative energy but the energy that has fashioned the world is not conscious nor is it absolute. Life in the world is not guided by the knowledge of Truth and also all its achievements are imperfect. "All that we do is ever still to do", and not knowing the goal, we always journey but nowhere arrive. And even if Mind by a supreme effort can catch some distant gleam of Truth, life keeps to its human middle way and swings always between opposites. "Even if Mind is able to reflect some image of essential Truth in its substance, yet the dynamic force and action of Truth appears in it always broken and divided."[2] That is why some heroic souls seek a permanent achievement not in but beyond the world, and because all power seems to be unconscious and therefore corrupt, they search after a realisation which is static and silent. In effect it means a

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, p. 255.

[2] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 263.

realisation of the pure element, the spiritual stuff in us and through it, of the Reality. Whatever may be the form of that realisation, it leaves the mind, life and body—and these make up our world—to their unconscious working and impure dealings, a realisation certainly very high but also certainly very incomplete.

Ages of spiritual sadhana bear witness to the reality of this achievement. But that the world is a creation of misleading Maya does not prove that the issue is between a life in Ignorance and a high but static realisation. Since there is the dynamic aspect of the Divine, he must be realised in Power also. In fact there are systems of Yoga like the Gita's, the Shakta, Shaiva and the Vaishnava Yogas, which accept the dynamic realisation also as part of their aim. Accepting also the reality of the individual soul, these prefer a life of relation with the personal Divine to absorption in the Impersonal. But this life is possible only in the highest Heaven or in the Divine's own plane of existence. For these Yogas also consider life in the Ignorance as incorrigibly dark, painful and futile. The possibility of the world's transformation, the special characteristic note of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, is not even thought of by them. But because Sri Aurobindo has seen the common substantiality of everything in spite of innumerable forms, and also because he knows that these innumberable forms are taken through the Supermind by the supreme Consciousness-Force deploying itself in various manner, he is categorical that Matter, *Jaḍa*, can be transmuted into the luminous substance of the divine Spirit. And if Matter is capable of transmutation, certainly the vital, *Prāṇa*, and the Mind, the *Manas*, the elements of our normal personality, can also be made perfect vessels of the splendours of the Spirit. The triple world of Mind, Life, and Matter, the field of Ignorance, has to be the world of Knowledge. The world in which the Divine seems to have lost himself is intended to be the venue of his utter manifestation. Below Ignorance is the Inconscient, the field of total darkness and utter disunion. From Inconscient evolves Ignorance, which is seeking knowledge and broken power and straining after union. Now Ignorance will evolve into Knowledge and invincible Power and inalienable Unity. Its seeking after knowledge will be turned into puissant illumination, its broken power into sovereign Force, its straining after union into an accomplished harmony. "Life is the field of a divine manifestation not yet complete: here, in life, on earth, in the body,—*ihaiva*, as the Upanishads insist,—we have to unveil the Godhead; here we must make its transcendent greatness, light and sweetness real to our consciousness, here possess and, as far as may be, express it."[1]

[1] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 27.

We have said that the world of Mind, Life and Matter is an involution of the Supermind. Now involution is the precursor of Evolution, self-veiling is followed by self-revealing. Spirit sleeping and dormant in Matter asserts itself, consciousness in the lower involute aspires for a higher expression, and the derivations of the Supermind higher than Matter, namely Life and Mind, are manifested in it. The nisus of evolution presses hard and Sri Aurobindo says that the time has come for the Supermind to manifest itself in Matter. With the Supermind manifest in the world, the secret power of its evolution will be overtly operative and will openly guide life in the world. The true origin of the world is also its goal, even now it is secretly leading the world to its consummation. In the concluding chapter of 'The Life Divine' published in the *Arya*, Sri Aurobindo wrote: "This Light (The Supermind) is not something belonging only to another world and another plane of existence, it is secret in all the nescience of material Nature and the Ignorance of Mind."[1] Now it is patent that when a higher quality emerges in a lower one, the latter undergoes a great change and behaves differently than when the former was not evolved. The response of the trunk of a tree, which is vitalised matter, to the woodcutter's axe is different from that of the inert matter of iron to the blacksmith's hammer. And the functioning of the human body is still more different from that of the tree because it is not only vitalised but also inhabited by Mind. When the Supermind is manifested, Matter will be purified of its dross and hard resistance, Life of its disturbed and senseless movement, Mind of its ignorance and imperfect potency. They will all receive and accept and express the divine light and law.

The Supermind has not yet overtly manifested itself in the world. The purpose of the Master's sadhana is to manifest the supramental Brahman by bringing down the Supermind from its high original plane of existence to the world of Mind, Life and Matter. Its two-fold object is to quicken the ascent of the Consciousness-Force secret in them and also the descent into them of the next higher evolute which is the Supermind. This simply means the manifestation of the Supermind in purified Matter, refined Life and illumined Mind in which it is already secretly working. When the descent is accomplished, the being of man and his threefold nature will be led by true knowledge and invincible energy. His life then will be a movement of unity expressing itself in diversity. Nothing will be abolished and it will be a life rich in relations but based on the intimate sense of oneness, because that is the very essence of the supramental consciousness.

[1] *Arya*, Vol. V, p. 323.

"It is the very nature of the supramental experience that it can perpetuate the play of difference without forfeiting or in the least diminishing either the divine union or the infinite oneness."[1]

The means of this transformation is a synthesis of Yoga which will enable man first to know his true being, then to realise all the diverse aspects of the Divine and also to gain mastery of the forces of life through a firm grasp of the Supermind. The new Yoga accepts and absorbs in principle, if not in details, the essential elements of all the Yogas, integralises them into the sure foundation of a new development of the soul which is the possession of all the aspects of Brahman through the knowledge that he has of himself and then through its power, to build every lower derivation of that knowledge into its own pristine image. It synthetises knowledge of the Impersonal with the love of the personal Divine, adds to it the aim of converting our normal human nature into the divine nature and the mastery of the forces of the world and life with a view to using that mastery to do the Divine's Will in the world, crowning the whole movement by a victorious assault on the darkest citadel of present nature, namely the physical, and bringing into its most secret recesses the purifying Force of the Supermind, even as Prometheus brought the Fire from Heaven. And because the microcosm is really the macrocosm in miniature, because the worlds without are really the worlds within, this transformation will occur on a cosmic scale, even though it may start in one individual who makes himself fit to receive the Supermind even into his physical body. Those who will open themselves to the supramental influence will gradually become fit to hold it and thus become further centres of the transforming power's operation. In this way a society of supermen, who will be the leaders of evolution, will be established and will grow and common life in the world will be transformed because those who will live according to the supreme Light will themselves be transformed.

It needs be mentioned here that man is not a complex of Mind, Life and Matter. Behind this frontal appearance is his true being which Sri Aurobindo calls the psyche. We have spoken of the self-individualisation of the Divine. This true individual is the real Self, the Unborn and Immutable Spirit of man. The Self is not involved in the world of Ignorance but sends down a ray as it were into it. This ray is the soul, which through a series of births and deaths reaches the human stage where it develops a physical, vital and mental human consciousness and a being of itself which is the psychic being. The psyche is immutable only in the sense that it

[1] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 147.

does not change its basic spiritual nature, but not in the sense that it does not evolve. For it grows and evolves towards the Self through its various experiences in the world of Ignorance. It is the permanent stuff in man, his mind, life and body dissolving after death. In its progression from life to life the psychic supports the outer man's evolution from behind a veil, then at a particular stage it is able to openly guide human nature to a divine fulfilment. Sri Aurobindo has called the process psychicisation of our being and nature, and it is the psychicisation that the Yoga is intended to achieve first. Indeed the supramental transformation can take place only after man has fully accepted the guidance of the psyche in all his nature. "To merge the consciousness in the Divine and to keep the psychic being controlling and changing all the nature and keeping it turned to the Divine till the whole being can live in the Divine is the transformation we seek. There is further the supramentalisation, but this only carries the transformation to its own highest and largest possibilities—it does not alter its essential nature."[1]

To the question when will this consummation take place, the obvious answer is that it cannot be said in terms of our standards of time. For one thing humanity itself is the medium of its evolution into super-humanity in the world. When the soul came down to the world of Ignorance, it did so not under compulsion but out of conscious free choice. Freedom is the basis of creation and continues to be the motive-force behind all progress and evolution. If man is not satisfied with his present existence of light covered by shadow, of pleasure baulked by pain and of life haunted by death, let him freely aspire after life of Knowledge, Bliss and Immortality. That life is in the making "in the quarries of God" and is Nature's secret aim in the world. But still, as Vivekananda said, Yoga compresses 'one's evolution into a single life or a few years or even a few months of bodily existence.' We have said that nature is in travail of the supramental life and Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is in essence a turning of Nature's tardy movement into a swift and conscious march towards the consummation; it is Nature's own Yoga done consciously and with deliberate aim. If man becomes the earnest sadhaka of this Yoga, it is beyond doubt that the realisation of the goal will be quickened. Sri Aurobindo says that the goal is decreed and inevitable. For though it is true that

> Hard is it to persuade earth-nature's change;
> Mortality bears ill the eternal's touch:

[1] *Letters of Sri Aurobindo*, Second Series, pp. 46-47.

It fears the pure divine intolerance
Of its assault of ether and of fire;
It murmurs at its sorrowless happiness,
Almost with hate repels the light it brings;
It trembles at its naked power of Truth
And the might and sweetness of its absolute Voice.[1]

yet man is the chosen instrument of the new evolution and though his superficial consciousness may not know, deep within himself he is aspiring for it, indeed it is God in him that is aspiring, for the real Man is nothing but God come down to fulfill Himself on earth.

And how shall the end be vain when God is guide?
The more the goal recedes, the more it lures;
However his mind and flesh resist or fail,
A will prevails cancelling his conscious choice.
An influx presses from the closed Beyond
Forbidding to him rest and earthly ease,
Till he has found himself he cannot pause.
There is a Light that leads, a Power that aids;
Unmarked, unfelt it sees for him and acts:
Ignorant, he forms the All-conscient in his depths,
Human, looks up to superhuman peaks:
A borrower of Supernature's gold,
He paves his road to Immortality.[2]

If man chooses to pave his road to Immortality without leaving it to be done by ignorant Nature in her own good time, certainly the Divine will respond to his aspiration and the goal come nearer home. Let him pause and think and decide to become the Lord's instrument in the battle supreme against darkness and falsehood, pain and suffering, incapacity and death.

Meanwhile the very presence of the Master (and other spiritual mystics also) ought to make us supremely grateful to them, because it is they that hold together and preserve the worlds. The Mahabharata in a luminous line surcharged with high poetry and profound metaphysics says: *Lokā hi sarve tapasā dhriyante*, all the worlds are held together by spiritual energy. (Adhyaya 101). It is with reference to this doctrine which is not merely

[1] *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*, Book 1, Canto 1.

[2] *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*, Book 3, Canto IV.

a theory that Krishna's exhortation regarding *Lokasangraha* is to be understood. It is the seers and the saints who, as Sri Aurobindo says, "preserve the knowledge that preserves the world." Aldous Huxley strikes a similar note when he says that where there is no vision, the people perish, and if those that are the salt of the earth lose their savour, there is nothing to keep this earth disinfected, nothing to prevent it from falling into decay. The mystics are the channels through which the knowledge of reality filters down into our human universe of ignorance and illusion. A totally unmystical world would be a world totally blind and insane. The very presence of a mystic amongst us is wholesome and counterbalances the powers of destruction.

Sri Aurobindo is an undeniable proof, if any proof were needed, of the reality of the Bodhisattva ideal, the ideal that deliverance from Ignorance does not necessarily mean Nirvana or extinction of being, that it is a more spiritual aim to help others achieve the same felicity that one has attained for oneself. Indeed it is a far higher ideal than that of Nirvana. The Arhat seeks his own Nirvana. The Bodhisattva seeks that of others also, and though qualified for Nirvana, he sacrifices it to the idea of helping others attain it also. Precisely because of that Nirvana lies at his feet as it were, and for the Bodhisattva Samsara and Nirvana are the same. The concept of Bodhisattva is not a concession made to the weak in spirit who cannot scale the heights of Nirvana by themselves but need the help of a God or a human Teacher. It is an intellectual expression of real office and function in the scheme of the divine governance of the world. The Bodhisattva after having rent through the veil of Avidya, attains extinction of his unregenerate lower being. But that also enables him to achieve an "universalised individuality," an individuality which free from the pranks of the seperative ego-sense, is a centre of the play of the spirit. "The desire of personal salvation, however high its form, is an outcome of ego; it rests on the idea of our own individuality and its desire for its personal good or welfare, its longing for a release from suffering or its cry for the extinction of the trouble of becoming and makes that the supreme aim of our existence."[1] On the other hand "Often we see this desire of personal salvation overcome by another attraction which also belongs to the higher turn of our nature and which indicates the essential character of the action the liberated soul must pursue. It is that which is implied in the great legend of the Amitabha Buddha who turned away when his spirit was on the threshold of Nirvana and took the vow never to cross it while a single being remained

[1] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 274.

in the sorrow and the Ignorance."[1] Sri Aurobindo is a living example of a Bodhisattva, because in addition to helping to preserve the world, he is showing the path to suffering humanity, to countless people who are fallen and weak, maimed and weary and whose lost faith in themselves and their spiritual destiny is being restored by his magic influence.[2] And on top of this his real work is to help man evolve from a half-awake mental being into the fully awake supramental being, "to make earth a heaven and life beatitude's kiss." The most perfect symbolic expression of that life is the following piece of poetic prose: "As if honey could taste itself and all its drops together and all its drops could taste each other and each the whole honey-comb *as itself*, so should the end be with God and the soul of man and the universe."[3] (*Italics mine*).

A world of relations in which each relata knows the others as forms of itself, a world of variety in which each variation is a note in a harmony, a world in which the body of man is aglow with the purity of the divine substance, his life vibrant with the power of the divine Force, his mind endowed with the vision of the Truth-Consciousness, is indeed the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, and life in it verily the Life Divine. Would that the Life Divine be our one aspiration, would that the Divine in his Grace respond to that aspiration, would that India listen to the august voice of the Master through whom she will speak to the world: Hearken unto me.

ARABINDA BASU

[1] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 275.

[2] Whether or not the Mahayana school which preaches this ideal gives the right interpretation to Buddha's teachings is another question. All that we want to emphasize here is that the ideal itself is not merely a necessary metaphysical concept and convenient religious symbol but a fact of the dynamic spiritual consciousness. The Adhikarika Purusas of the Tantra may be remembered in this connection.

[3] *Thoughts and Glimpses*, pp. 18-19.

YOGA IS TRUE LIFE

THE life we live is a continuous succession of deaths. It is an unbroken series of sensations that have a deceptive semblance of life but are, in truth, the disguised agents of death. As science proves, every moment every cell of our physical organism and, as psychology shows, every fibre of our subjective composition is undergoing change, that is, death, and being incorporated into various combinations. Life is a ceaseless flux and our subjective and objective personality a mere shifting phenomenon cast up for a brief moment by the universal existence. Life is frail, precarious and beset with miseries and even an escape from it an uncertain and hazardous adventure.

Where is then hope for man? Is he eternally doomed to a life of subjection to disease and distress and death, or is there a way out? Is there a release, a secure basis of permanent peace and happiness anywhere?

This question leads us naturally to the problem of the evil with which life seems to be afflicted. What has made life such as it is? Why is there so much discord, so much clash of forces, tendencies and ideas? Is this world, in fact, a huge cauldron of battling elements and life in it a devil's dance of blind desires and destructive passions? Sometimes, of course, angelic beings come down into this world bearing a message of love, of purity, of the joy of freedom; but where they come from, what they come for, nobody knows. Like a brief illumination, they move in this Cimmerian darkness and then depart to return no more. Noble and lofty ideas flash across a few great minds, a few mighty souls strive to realise them in life, a partial success is somehow effected with much effort, but the solid coalition of the hostile forces undoes much of what is achieved and humanity finds itself, to its agonised bewilderment, no better than what it was before, or rather often the worse for all its exhausting labours.

Why, one asks in amazement, why this terrible wastage of energy, this colossal gamble of the life-force? "A wild goose chase", would reply a cynic; "an unknowable mystery", would be the serious verdict of a baffled agnostic; "a law of evolution", would be the bland observation of a thoughtful scientist, but an evolution of what, to what and on what lines, he cannot say. "Lila", would blurt out an emotional devotee with a winning smile; "Maya, incomprehensible, invincible Maya", would be the grim sententious opinion of the Illusionist; but all fail to fathom the mystery to its farthest depths. Some touch but the circumference and

mistake it for the centre, or faintly glimpsing a vast, inaccessible space stretching beyond the horizon of their bounded vision, declare in despair that the problem is insoluble.

But is the problem really insoluble? Is this world really a dream or a devil's trap, as it appears to be? Or, is there a Truth behind, a law, a meaning and a purpose, a unity and a harmony?

Life is one, indivisible and universal; and if we seek a solution of its mystery, we must take our stand upon its essential unity and refuse to be distracted by the phenomenal divisions and differences of its diverse elements. This universal life can be compared to an immense ocean of which our individual lives are myriad waves. Conscious, blissful, purposive and self-fulfilling, it is the timeless movement of a Being, a Purusha, who deploys His infinite possibilities in Time and Space through His countless self-created names and forms. He has become many, and even while enjoying His multiplicity, He is still one and eternally beyond His self-manifestation. Inalienably free in His transcendence, He identifies Himself in creation, by an act of exclusive concentration which does not abrogate His unitarian consciousness, with each of His phenomenal forms to the apparent exclusion of the rest and becomes in each form an ego, a transient nucleus of ill-coordinated or uncoordinated formations striving to preserve its individuality in the midst of an overwhelming mass of alien forces. In this ego He forgets His own supernal source which sustains and nourishes Him in each form, forgets His oneness with all and emphasises an egocentric discord. He lives by struggle, by combat, by an increasing stress on those tendencies which accentuate and widen His separateness from His other selves. This is the primal and principal cause of His suffering and of the thousand ills which pursue Him from life to life—His forgetfulness of His true, unchanging, untrammelled Self; forgetfulness of His essential oneness with the whole universe; trenchant and obstinate self-separation and an ignorant disregard of the law of cosmic harmony. In order to appease the passing hungers of His inconstant lesser personality, He wages a constant war, consciously or sub-consciously, with His own greater Self and pits Himself against the Many.

This separative ignorance is self-imposed by Him for an uncurbed play of His infinite possibilities. Darkness and suffering are accepted so that Light and Bliss may vindicate their sovereignty. There can be no play if there are no dualities, no opposites, no losing and finding. What appear as dark and evil are as much a part of the play as their shining opposites, and, seen in the right perspective, they appear as indispensable elements for the progressive manifestation of the Divine. By self-involution the

Superconscient becomes the Inconscient and by the reverse movement of self-evolution, He recovers His Superconscience. The divisions and dualities, evils and falsehoods which abound in life are the legacy of inconscient Matter and mark the first three steps of the evolutionary Spirit. They constitute God's play in the Ignorance as their opposites constitute His play in the Light.

We see then that it is the separative ego, the dividing "I", that is the hub of the mechanism of this lower nature, the centre of this play of Ignorance. Once it is cast off, we realise that there is only the One without a second, the one ocean and no separative waves, or rather the one ocean in all waves and the one ocean as all waves. We realise that there is no essential darkness and suffering, but only the varied, if diminished and distorted, self-expressions of an undivided Reality which is All-Light and All-Bliss. If there are grief and affliction in this world of Ignorance, honour and dishonour, success and failure, it is He and no other who is inflicting them upon Himself for the enjoyment of their diverse flavours. The Absolute creates an immense network of relativities for the purpose of His mysterious play and Himself becomes phenomenally entangled in them, though all the time immutably poised beyond the reach of all the reactions of relativites.

In order, then, to live a life which is free, blissful, harmonious and radiant with an all-seeing knowledge, we must raise our consciousness out of the obscure, egoistic formations of the becoming into the vastness of the transcendent and universal Being, and live in it. This living in the Transcendent and the Universal, and not in the shifting formations of Nature, is Yoga; and it is this which is Life, deathless and chainless. It is deathless, because it is neither encased in tiny dissolving moulds of clay, nor shut up in the subjective formations that change by the laws of Nature. But this does not imply that one has to leave the body or all one's mental and vital scaffolding in order to enter into some absolute nihil or some supracosmic blissful infinity of existence. It is here, in this world, in this body, that this state can be attained. The only change that has to be effected—and that is precisely the aim of Yoga—is a radical change of consciousness. Although living in the body, the Yogin lives in the Divine and the changes of his phenomenal nature do not affect him in the least, as the rising and breaking of the waves do not affect the sea. He watches and enjoys the workings of his nature as if he were watching and enjoying a drama enacted before his eyes—its various scenes and episodes and kaleidoscopic changes of colours and forms. He covets nothing, hates nothing, but enjoys all—the total as well as the individual effects of the play. What is pain and torture to the man in the ignorance becomes the very essence of delight to the Yogin;

for, in every movement he perceives the hand of the Master Artist and feels the touch of the Supreme Beloved. His life then becomes an uninterrupted Yoga with the Divine, and whatever he does, on whatever plane of creation he moves, he moves and works in the Divine. Crossing beyond the dark waters of death, he attains to immortality—the life everlasting and free.

This is the highest achievement offered by the greatest schools of Yoga—a secure, or, to be more precise, a more or less secure, dwelling of the spiritual consciousness of the individual in the essential unity of the Universal and the Transcendent. The poise of the being is shifted from the surface to the depths and the essential bliss and beauty of existence is enjoyed in spite of the phenomenal discords and dualities. There is no doubt that this Yoga, union, is immortality itself, the true and everlasting life; but it is, as it were, a cloistered immortality, and not the triumphant vindication of the Spirit's uncurbed sovereignty over all life. The phenomenal discords still persist, the true life has been achieved only in the soul and not in nature. The body, life and mind, though much purified, remain fundamentally wedded to ignorance and impurity and subject to frequent oscillation and obscuration.

It is here that Sri Aurobindo comes with his revolutionary message of integral union with the One by a complete conversion and transformation of the entire human nature. The true life he promises through his integral Yoga is not only a life in the distant depths, but also a rich and divinely victorious life on the surface. It is a life of unassailable purity and freedom and immortality in a divinised physical body as well as in the Spirit. His Yoga, which pivots upon the Supermind will bring down the supreme Force of the Divine and effect a radical change of this weak and warped human nature. The play which started in darkness will emerge into light, and ignorance will be transmuted into plenary knowledge. No longer will the Yogin, though firmly stationed in the Spirit, have to bear the assaults of the anarchic forces of darkness upon his vulnerable nature; he will convert his nature into Supernature and enjoy an absolute immunity and freedom in the material world.

This message of Sri Aurobindo reveals the ultimate purpose of creation, which is an evolution from Inconscience to Superconscience, from Ignorance to perfect Knowledge, from suffering to ineffable bliss and from death to Immortality. The supreme culmination of this long evolutionary process will be the life of Truth and Unity and beatific Harmony established upon earth for all humanity. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga offers the truest life to every human being who is strong and sincere enough to follow it to its glorious end.

RISHABHCHAND

THE POSITIVE APPROACH TO SPIRITUALITY*

II

IF we can seize with the same ancient tenacity that earliest aspiration of man, which yearns for the realisation in this earthly life of a Perfection beyond, then it would become more immanent to the modern mind that a Divine Life on earth must be the destiny and ultimate aim of mankind, its evolutionary goal. But in order to accept this ideal as something more than a flight of fantasy or an exotic yearning, we have to recognise first that the Beyond—which we call Spirit—is in fact a reality, as real at least as the material world is known to be in our present-day rational thought. And secondly we must see that this spiritual reality not only belongs to an other-worldly domain, as it so appears, but that it also pervades and is in fact contained in this present worldly life. For Spirit, an Unknown though by no means an unknowable, only seems to be the unseen and the intangible merely because it is beyond man's present range of sensory awareness, and has therefore been rejected as unreal in an age bred and born out of a too-exclusive materialism.

For long ages however, it has been a deep-rooted phenomenon of human thought, penetrating also into the life of the world, to become attached to one of two extremes, and to deny or exclude the other. Thus it came about, that either Matter was taken to be the all-existent Reality, or else Spirit would be presented as the All. In this way we find that for the western materialist, the inheritor of an almost exclusive line of naturalistic thought, Matter was not only taken to be the basis of reality, but was also regarded as the sole existing entity. And conversely the idealistic tradition of the East had come to regard Spirit as the one self-existent Reality. For the materialist this exclusiveness led ultimately and logically enough to the rejection of God,—or at most to a suspension of judgment on His existence until He could be proved to exist. And for the pure idealist there resulted the natural recoil from the world and all its activities, which we now regard as the hall-mark of a medieval outlook and static way of life. It was this age-long fission in human life and thought which largely produced that vast gulf we see separating the ancient knowledge so alienly from the modern outlook. And this division in the world makes it all the more difficult for

* Based on *The Life Divine*.

the present age to accept the larger Reality: that Matter and Spirit are but the two extremities of a Multiplicity, which itself is embraced by as well as contained in the Supreme All.

It is a good sign, however, that a strong current in modern thought is rapidly breaking away from the old materialism. Already physical science, the main stronghold of the materialist, has rejected the absolute validity of sense-data, in showing that there is a deeper reality within Matter other than that ordinarily cognised by our sense faculties. The very basis of the materialist's faith has thus been irrevocably undermined, and science itself is now in the position of having to seek for other more reliable values to support its more recent discoveries. Moreover it is certain that present-day science cannot possibly find a resting-place in the fog of indeterminacy into which it has latterly plunged. Here waves of probability and chance phenomena have displaced the former stable ground based on the classical system of natural law. Science in fact is compelled to push forward out of this uncertainty, as is already happening in its striving towards a wider and more supra-physical representation of the Cosmos. Sooner or later however, its search must be more constructively and consciously directed towards a comprehensive grasp of a composite Reality, which can adequately replace the solid tangibility of Matter without also losing the essential reality of the latter. And in this endeavour it is not likely that the modern mind will repeat the error of the past, in taking Matter to be an illusion, after materialism has so indelibly impressed its significance on the world.

It can now be seen that the age of pure materialism had really reached its natural end in that fundamental agnosticism which denied a reality to all that could not be grasped by sense-bound thought, labelling it an Unknowable. Thought had indeed reached here the limit of a limitation. And in a similar way we can see that asceticism had also reached its own end-point in rejecting the entire appearance of things as a pure illusion. Thus the scale of values in these two paths of thought has become completely reversed, showing also their utter polarity; for while the reality of the Illusionist became the Unknowable of the Materialist, the sole reality of the latter had become the very matrix of all unreality for the former. Significantly enough however, though diametrically opposed, each in his own separate field had arrived at a unity—either of Matter or of Spirit—to which all things could be reduced; and behind the manifestation of the universe each had delegated an elusive Unknown which thus appeared to be a larger figure, or alternatively a shadow, of the known. The agnostics called this Unknown a non-existent, whereas the Illusionist saw in it a vaster Reality beside which the universe paled to a mere nothingness.

That there is in fact a universal Unity amidst all this complex multiplicity, is now beginning to be discovered again through various lines of modern scientific inquiry. Thus, one example out of many is to be seen in the more minute investigation into the structure of the living cell, particularly in the more highly evolved nucleus of the blood cell, where a similar movement has been observed to the one revealed within the atom of Matter. And both, in fact, reproduce on the microscopic and infra-microscopic scales the same planetary motion which appears also to be innate in the macrocosm. It is significant also that the physical scientist, having reached a limit in his own sphere of inquiry, is turning an eye more and more towards Life, as well as towards Mind, in the hope of finding beyond the now obvious bounds of the physical world some causal relationship that will throw light on the many inexplicable phenomena observed in the material realm. But in this respect, the more he probes into the intermediary phenomena of Life and Mind, the more he is becoming aware of a larger Reality looming beyond or perhaps behind this outer play of existence. And it is becoming increasingly clear also, that this larger Reality cannot be reduced merely to an inconscient Energy, or a Life-Force or even a universal Mind, as has already been attempted. Such a simplified monism cannot explain the intricate and involved complexity of things, nor can it integrate the harmony of their interrelated working. Moreover, if we posit a blind mechanical force, or a grandiose extension of life or mind, as the base and stuff of all existence, then there is little meaning in man's present striving to control the forces of Nature. Ultimately we are compelled to conceive of a greater Power than Mind, a more far-reaching purposiveness through which man will be able to attain to that complete control which science now envisages. For a real mastery must finally imply the surpassing and standing above these external elements of man's present existence.

From this aspect of modern thought it seems more feasible to believe as the ancients had in fact revealed, that there is a larger Unity which extends beyond the continuity of the already manifested gradations of evolution—Matter, Life and Mind. And we can more readily perceive that a vaster entity, a Supermind, could become the possible new basis and a manifestation in this earth life. In this respect there is a considerable body of evidence throughout the whole history of mankind, which shows that a wider Reality is indeed continuous with man's present order of awareness. This is particularly so in the experience of those who have themselves traversed the bounds of an individual consciousness, and entered or made momentary contact with the wider Cosmic Consciousness. In these experiences we find that such Consciousness has either presented itself in the

symbols of a cosmic largeness, the wide embrace of Cosmos in its fullness, or it has given a direct opening to the subliminal zones behind the surface veil of appearances, revealing the inner detailed structure of the Cosmos. The evidence for this wider awareness, in the diverse depths and degrees befitting to a multiple consciousness, is amply contained in the declared experiences of the Seers, the Prophets, the Mystics and the Saints of the world, as well as scattered throughout the works of the great creative minds. Since all these experiences reveal a wider and deeper faculty of knowing, it seems more probable, as certain modern thinkers have adduced, that the next mutation for man lies precisely in this heightened, though by no means highest, consciousness becoming the future normal possession and basis of man's being, in the same way that his present self-consciousness had emerged from and superceded an animal instinct. Thus these higher states of consciousness would be the key as well as the fundamental steps of advancement, which can lead and open the way for modern man to attain to that greater Being which he really is potentially.

It is apparent that if we accept such a significant meaning for life on earth, —and not merely regard the world as a mechanical round, or a transient phenomenon, or chance occurrence,—then the supreme purpose of man's very existence becomes increasingly clear. To reveal the Divine in himself and in the world is the Purpose. And for this achievement we realise that it can be nothing less than the omniscient Divine Will that sustains the entire movement, and which is indeed the real motive Power, though veiled, behind the all-too egoistic will of man as well as the collective will of humanity. But since God truly created man in His own image, as the world's scriptures declare, this also—the Divine Power and Will—is the hidden source of aspiration within him; for unless the God-nature is there within, the image must necessarily be an empty one. Thus, in addition to an inner conviction, we have the widespread confirmation that the Power of God not only guides from above but had Itself descended in Creation and entered into the very stuff of existence. Creation was thus not merely a projection, but a descent or involution of the Divine Self-nature to become the world; and Evolution is therefore the serial unfolding of this secret Power. It is these dynamic Truths which hold out for man the unlimited possibility of a Divine fulfilment on earth.

We see however, that the whole trend of present man's endeavours are being more and more directed towards a probing of the outer Nature, which is thus leading him further away from the heart of Reality, instead of nearer to it. For ultimately it is his own inner consciousness, the awareness extending from his innermost being, that must centralise all his knowledge

and work. It is only through the secret recesses of his soul, containing as it does the compressed seed of the Divine, that he can first embrace and possess that larger Reality, which otherwise in its infinite vastness is wholly beyond his grasp. From within he can at last begin to know and become conscious of the real Unity that embraces Multiplicity; instead of at present standing outside this centre and vaguely inferring a unity only as far as it can be pieced together out of an unseizable complexity. And knowing this Unity he can the more readily grow to that wholeness which he now begins to feel is man's true inherent status. For as the ancients had divined, it is only by knowing the supreme Reality within, that one can really become That which is also beyond,—and to know That means to enter into the heart of It.

N. PEARSON

In the sincerity of your effort towards silence lies the assurance of a purified mind.

* * *

Let patience and endurance be your companions on the way to physical transformation.

* * *

With aesthetic taste and vital purity build up vital harmony. This will make possible the manifestation of the supramental beauty in the physical.

* * *

Let the flame of devotion help you to have the patience needed for transformation.

ON HINDUISM*

IN beginning to speak on Hinduism I shall use a simile from the Katha Upanishad with a slight variation; 'as water rained upon the hill comes down in many streams,' so has Hinduism come down the slopes of time; but I shall speak only of 'the waters on the hill' and not of 'the many streams'; and I shall observe that, Hinduism is distinguished by the inclusiveness of its Philosophy and Religion, its practical motive in life and by its great common sense in not imposing the same rule of life *in the same way* on all. Its metaphysics has baffled the intellectuals; they see in it an abundance of contradictions. If we would understand the principles of Hinduism, its Philosophy and Religion,—these do not exist as apart in Hinduism—we must exceed certain points of view of the ordinary logical mind.

When the Upanishads want to convey the transcendental greatness of Brahman, they make light of even the principle features of the Universe as they are known to us. In understanding the principles of Hinduism we must follow the same method and apply the same principle. We must make light of main features of our logical thinking.

The ordinary logical mind is governed by the rule of opposites. It says, a thing is either this or that; or, it says a thing is "only this" or "only that". The point of view of Hinduism is the exact opposite of this attitude. Hinduism says: Neither this nor that; or, it says: "not this and that *alone*, but both, and even other than both." Therefore, Hinduism does not say: tell me the past or the future; the cause or the effect; the good and evil; it says: tell me what is other than good or evil, other than cause or effect and other than what is past or future and present: *anyatra dharmāt anyatra adharmāt, anyatra asmātkṛatākṛatāt, anyatra bhutāt ca bhavyāt ca, yattat paśyasi tad vada*; "Apart from the right (dharma) and apart from the unright (adharma); apart from both what has been done and what has not been done here; apart from what has been and what ought to be—what thou seest as that, speak that." (Katha: II. 14)

2. The simple fact is that Hinduism has come to be somehow seized of the idea of the Infinite, or the Imperishable, the *akṣara*; and it has the insight to see that the highest truth cannot be represented either as this

* A lecture delivered at a Symposium on "Brotherhood of Religions" at the Indian Institute of Culture, Bangalore.

only or as that only, or even as both. The Highest Truth cannot even be represented as 'the highest.' Engaged in his researches on Logic and on the problem of *stating* and expressing truth in an adequate language, Bertrand Russell has now discovered the need for 'a hierarchy of languages' which, he says, 'must extend upwards indefinitely.' So the Upanishads say: 'higher than the high imperishable,' *akṣarāt parataha paraḥ.*

Not only does Hinduism perceive Truth as infinite, it perceives it under infinite forms: as this as well as that, as one and as many, as personal and as impersonal. This ought to give us some indication why monotheism, pantheism, and ploytheism generally considered as contradictory coexist in Hinduism.

The diversity of beliefs in Hinduism is not due to ignorance or to alternative phases of ignorance and knowledge. Because Truth is infinite, and those who know say this, *Yad brahmavido vadanti*, Hinduism takes upon itself the liberty of contemplating it now under this form and now in another form. And it is after having realised that Truth is vast (*bṛhat*) and is infinite, can you choose to contemplate it in your own way; *etadevākṣaram jnātvā yo yadicchati tasya tat*: "Knowing the imperishable syllable, that which he chooses is his."

Therefore, Hindu polytheism is not a polytheism. Even when Hinduism believes or accepts a plurality of "gods" it accepts the one Lord of the gods —*devānām patirêkah*, and the gods are powers of Nature (higher and lower), which we must respect and not rebel against and whose laws we cannot violate. It is the glad Hindu imagination that pictures these powers as semi-personal requiring propitiation, like a newly built ship requiring a bottle of wine to be broken against its bows before sailing. *Namaste vāyo tvameva pratyakṣam brahmāsi; tvāmeva pratyakṣam brahma vadiśyāmi;* "salutations to thee O wind, thou art the 'plenipotentiary' of the Divine; I speak of you as such alone" a form of recitation very suitable to a sailor indeed. This may be Poetry; it is also Religion.

Hinduism allows unfettered scope for man's imagination to picture to himself, if he can, the form of the Divine: "Fire is his head; His eyes the Moon and Sun; the regions of space, His ears; His voice, the revealed Vedas; Wind, His breath; His heart, the whole world; (and) out of His feet, the earth." Yes, you *can* go on in this way if you like, but you must never miss the truth that the form which your imagination is trying to picture is truely the inner soul of all, *eṣa sarva bhutāntarātmā.* Also, you should not miss the truth that "the inner soul of all" is essentially *one;* it corresponds in form to every form and exceeds all forms and is outside them: *ekastatha sarvabhutāntarātmā rupam rupam pratirupo bahiśca.*

3. Hinduism faces this vast Universe but shows no false humility before it. Nor does it take up arms against it in a Promethean rebellion. It does not also reconcile itself with things in the usual way by saying after Browning: "God's in Heaven and all is right with the world". All is right with the world because, "whatever moves in this moving universe is the abode of God"; it is enveloped by the Divine: *ishāvāsyamidam sarvam yatkinca jagatyām jagat*, such is the faith of Hinduism very well illustrated in the great story of the young Prahlada.

Modern speculative philosophies of science tend to produce a kind of gloom by dwelling upon the *contrast* between what they call the "Mysterious Universe" and its infinity, and the finitude of man. Hinduism also compares man and the universe; looks at the one and looks at the other and utters with simple dignity, *pūrṇamadaha pūrṇamidam*: "that is infinite, this (also) is infinite"; "out of the infinite, the infinite arises;"; *purṇāt purnamucyate;* therefore, as the Upanishads say, "whatever is here, that is there; what is there, that again is here; *yadeveha tadamutra yadamutra tadanviha*. Where then the fear and the "mystery," or how long can the mystery remain as such in the face of that just confidence which asks: "(who) else than I is able to know" *madanyo jnātum arhati*?

4. Hinduism perceives all problems of existence as essentially problems of harmony, of equations and of synthesis; therefore, the mystery of existence is resolved for Hinduism in the equation. That Thou Art, *tat tvam asi*. Not only can man become a perfected moral soul, but more; "he can become one with God, one self with the Spirit of the Universe, one with a self that transcends the Universe." Hinduism does not, however, say that this should be attained or can be done "by some violent and impossible feat." Between man's ultimate divinity and his natural being there is a gulf; Hinduism bridges this gulf by a conception and a method which is its own: Karma and Reincarnation. According to Hinduism, "The spiritual perfection which opens before man is the crown of a long patient millennial outflowering of the spirit in life and nature..... By millions of lives in inferior forms the secret soul in the universe, conscious even in the inconscient, *cetano acetaneṣu*, has arrived at humanity: by hundreds, thousands, perhaps millions of lives man grows into his divine self-existence. Every life is a step which he can take backward or forward; by his action, his will in life, by the thought and knowledge that governs it, he determines what he is yet to be, *yathā karma, yathā śrutam*."[1]

[1] Sri Aurobindo: *A Defence of Indian Culture*, vide The Advent, Nov., 1948, p. 201.

While the law of Karma expresses the principle of a Sufficient Reason, it is quite possible that the doctrine of reincarnation is somewhat of a Dogma; but the truth contained in it is the necessary idea of a spiritual evolution of man's becoming divine and of the possibility of man translating into actuality his divine potency. This is not a Dogma; and without the central idea of a spiritual evolution, I submit, all asserted identity between the human and the divine will be of abstract significance only, like the tensor equations in the Theory of Relativity, which we do not yet know how to translate into the language of experimental physics.

Man becomes that which he *is* and man *is* immortal. To perceive this truth we need not lose ourselves in the controversies of the Schools of Hinduism and Buddhism. Whether the self of man is a permanent entity over and above its states or merely the owner of its states, we have to note the simple fact, as the Upanishads say that there is an entity "who is awake in those who are asleep," *eṣa suptêṣu jāgarti*; therefore, when "the hearing of the ear, the thought of the mind, the voice of speech, the breathing of the breath, the sight of the eye," go away all is not lost. If all is lost there is, at least, some one who knows this; *therefore*, all is not lost.

Hinduism states the doctrine of immortality in the most impressive way: *na ayam hanti, na hanyate*: "he neither kills nor is he killed"; but it does not expect an impressive demonstration of this truth to be given after the manner of Empedocles. No; the liberated must wait to be liberated as it were: *vimuktaśca vimucyate*, still carrying on his normal works *ātmakrida, ātmarati, kriyavān, eṣa brhmavidām variṣṭah*: "Having delight in the soul (Atman), having pleasure in the soul, doing the rites, such a one is the best of Brahma-knowers."

5. The high idealism of Hindu metaphysics and religion is tempered by the relativity of its methods of Sadhana. To transform the whole man and nothing less than the whole man is the aim of its Sadhana. Hinduism does not, therefore, deliver a frontal attack upon human nature from all sides. We look at the Absolute, said F.H. Bradley, through an aperture. This aperture is in our nature; it is in our emotions, in our will, in our intellect. There is some part of our nature more yielding to the influence of the Divine than other parts. In our attempt to transform man's personality, we must accept this relativity and start with it, prescribing to each nature a method of Sadhana most appropriate to it, though all methods and modes of spiritual life point to the same goal and reach the same objective. Like Plato, Hinduism compels the best minds to attain 'that knowledge which is the greatest of all', yet in the process of the 'conversion

of the soul from becoming to Being', as Plato said, Hinduism will not impose the same rules and the same method in the same way on all, because 'the mind more often faints from the severity of its study than from the severity of its gymnastics', as Plato said; therefore, the mind must be trained "to become able to endure the sight of Being." Unity of doctrine and diversity of practice, or fluidity of doctrine and rigidity of practice is, therefore, the characteristic note of Hinduism. *Jnānyogena samkhyānām karmayogena yoginām*: Jnana Yoga for the Samkhyas and Karma Yoga for the man of action. Thus the origin of the Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti Margas is Hinduism. In this there is no higher and no lower; what is attained by the one is also attained by the other: *yat sankhyaih prāpyate sthānam tad yogairapi gamyate.*

Another major concern of Hinduism is Dharma, but I have no time to go into it. I shall conclude by pointing out the attitude of Hinduism to its own scriptures and its intrinsic freedom from dogma. The Upanishads dismiss all dogmatism in their own way; "*Yasya amatam tasya matam, matam yasya na veda saḥ* It is conceived of him by whom it is not conceived of; he by whom it is conceived, knows it not." The large charity of Hinduism is shown in its tolerant attitude to sceptics and atheists and its large boldness is revealed in its free attitude to its own scriptures. The great house-holder Sounaka, it is said, approached Rishi Angiras and asked him: "Through understanding of what, Sir, is all this world understood?" Rishi Angiras answered this question by making a distinction between *aparā* vidya (lower knowledge) and *parā* vidya (higher knowledge) and declared knowledge of the Imperishable, *akṣara*, alone as higher knowledge: Hinduism, therefore, is not a Religion or a Philosophy or a Culture of a book or of books however sacred. It is the story of Man's experiments in the realisation of Truth, which is still going on and, which exceeds mere *written* truth: *śabdabrahmātivartate*. Let not, however, the logical spirit of *Either Or* raise its head here and say: burn the Scriptures for they teach the Lower Vidya and let us have only the Higher Vidya. This kind of logical rationalism fails to comprehend life; it fails to comprehend Truth. In life, ends are subtly interwoven. There is not only the immediate necessity, for example, of being cured of an illness we suffer from, but the remoter need of being wholly free from it in future. For the first we must accept the doctor; for the second, we must alter our mode of life and we require only ourselves. Therefore, *avidyayā mṛtyum tirtvā vidyayā amṛtam aśnute*; "with non-knowledge passing over death, with knowledge wins the immortal"; thus both the Lower Knowledge and the Higher Knowledge are justified.

The one and only message of Hinduism is, as the Upanishads say, *yo yadicchati tasya tat*; (in the pursuit of truth) "that which he chooses is his"; to give each person his liberty of spirit; to live truth in his own way; therefore, Hinduism does not give a person *a* religion, but gives to each *his* religion, if I may say so. We can, therefore, nod with sympathy at the critic who says that "Hinduism has never prepared a body of canonical scriptures or a common prayer book; it has never held a general council or convocation; never defined the relations of the laity and the clergy; never regulated the canonisation of saints or their worship; never established a single centre of religious life, like Rome or Canterbury; never prescribed a course of training for its priests, and has never been a state religion like that of Babylonia or Egypt."[1] Also, you can amuse yourself by comparing Hinduism, as some have done, to the state of religion as it existed in Rome, which Gibbon describes in his own way: "The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful."

Hinduism allows its critics their freedom, because, they represent that essential intrinsic freedom of soul and thought, whereby the diversity which they criticise have grown in Hinduism; therefore, Hinduism does appear to have the very extraordinary characteristic of being "equally true and equally false" if you like. But the truth is that Hinduism as a spiritual culture "opens up a hundred ways to arrive at the truth of our religious being; but its consummation is to see God in man and man in God, God in Nature and Nature in God, God in all things and all things in God, and to go beyond them to their origin in the supracosmic Absolute, Eternal and Infinite. To see the Supreme altogether and in all ways and grow to be at one with Him, that is the eternal religion, *eṣa dharmah sanātanah*."[2]

N. A. NIKAM

[1] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VI, p. 712.

[2] Sri Aurobindo: *A Defence of Indian Culture*, vide The Advent, April 1949, p. 93.

LIGHTS ON THE FUNDAMENTALS

(Continued from the last issue)

The Planes

42. Consciousness modified institutes varying conditions (or states of itself), becomes the World-movement in variegated structures, and is here veiled, there revealed, and elsewhere quite manifest for ever.[1]

In the first section and subsequently also it was stated in unequivocal terms that consciousness is fundamental to all existence. It is this first principle of the Vedanta that provides a broadbase for the structure in all its details for the comprehensive system of this philosophic thought. Static, indeed, is the basic aspect; but the power of Self-manifestation brings out in its wake the Cosmic movement in a graded structure. It is the self-conditioning poise that produces the varying states and creates conditions in an order of successive steps of the movement that commences from the Pure Existence, the Absolute Beyond and comes down towards the formation of Material Existence. Corresponding, then, to the stress and modes of Consciousness are their fields conditioned, formed and constituted by the creative force that is its inalienable right in the active mood. This movement is not, and of course cannot, be uniform in its grades which are separate and different from one another, and variously constituted and formed and have their own predominant principles, distinguishing features and outstanding powers in different degrees. The term world-movement *Jagat-gati* connotes the movement of the Cosmos and is not restricted to this world. The variegated structures in the Cosmos denote the colourful and variously constituted and conditioned existence in the ordered steps of the movement. That the Consciousness is not the same everywhere in the Manifestation is stressed here when it is affirmed that it is here veiled etc. It is veiled, but exists as the substratum in the lowest grade of Matter, what is called the Inconscient, it is unveiled in the higher grades as in the mind-levels, 'quite manifest for ever' in the Supermind, in the Eternal triple existence.

[1] अवस्थाभेदनिर्मात्री चित्रबन्धा जगद्गतिः।
क्वचिद् गुप्ता क्वचिद् व्यक्ता चिन्मयी क्वचिदुल्बणा ॥४२॥

In order that it may not be supposed that the same thing that is stated about the sevenfold world in the previous section is stated here, the text avoids the mention of the worlds here and proceeds to describe the character of the states of consciousness, and the corresponding planes of being. It must be noted here that the worlds and planes are neither synonymous nor interchangeable terms. There is a distinction which must be clearly understood. Planes are grades, levels of being and consciousness; they are steps in the Cosmic Existence and at each step, or each level of being there can be many worlds. For a world is after all an organisation constituted in a settled poise of the Spirit to work out a general relation between the experiencing spirit and the powers of the Cosmic becoming. From this it would be clear that the worlds of the different planes are differently constituted and each has its own laws and government. The seven worlds spoken of in the previous section are on the seven levels or planes of Consciousness. Stress is laid on the fact that the true character of these planes or levels of existence is consciousness which in its power of becoming is featured in the sevenfold condition of Existence. These planes are likened to series of steps in a ladder in the next verse.

43. (These conditions of Consciousness are) the series of Planes that start from the Supreme and are framed like a ladder in ordered steps.

44. Between the Lord and the world released from Him lie the series of planes in a vertical pose reaching the two ends.[1]

Since the origin of the whole cosmic movement is the Supreme Spirit, the hierarchy of planes of Consciousness starts from above, from the height of Being, in the Sat-chit-ananda, the Supreme; it gradually comes down and lapses in the world and plane of Matter, in the apparent total absence of consciousness, what we call the Inconscient. Hence these steps in the hierarchy are likened to a ladder, as the movement is vertical from high on downward here. At the summit of this Cosmic existence is the Supreme Lord, Ishwara; at the lower end here is the world of Matter. Between the two ends stretch the planes and worlds built by the Energy of the Cosmic movement that starts from the Supreme Will above. In between the two poles, one the supreme above—the Consciousness, the other here—the Inconscient, are stretched the planes of Being where Consciousness varies in its force-movement, in degree and intensity in accord with the consti-

[1] परस्मात्प्रस्थिता सेयं भूमिकानां परम्परा।
सोपानकल्पिताकारा निःश्रेणिरिव निर्मिता ॥४३॥
ईशस्य तद्विसृष्टस्य जगतश्चान्तरे स्थिता।
ऊर्ध्वाधोगतिकक्ष्येयमुभयीं कोटिमास्थिता ॥४४॥

tution of the particular level that is its field; these lie like the rungs of a ladder that is the passage that leads on from the Earth plane here to the higher regions of the Spirit above. Apart from the nature of the Cosmic structure that is briefly characterised as the passage between the two ends of Existence as formed in the scheme of this creation, this formation of the planes as a passage has a great utility and is of the utmost importance to the Yogin of this persuasion. And this is stated in the next verse.

45. This is the passage pleasing to those who are aware of Yoga, whose sublime origin is in the shore beyond Darkness, which is rich with a series of steps, a ladder for those who wish to ascend (to the summit).[1]

It must be noted here that all spiritual realisations are not of the same kind or order. It is perfectly true that whatever path one may tread and follow, successful it does lead ultimately to the One Divine, Sat-Chit-Ananda. But the aspect on which stress is laid is determined by the path of one's choice. Devotion, Knowledge, Works, some or all of them combined or each severally yields the right result ultimately. But we may speak of two lines of realisation. The one broad distinction between the two is this. Whether through devotion developing into love for the Divine or through knowledge, one gets God-realisation or direct perception of the Reality—and this experience can be of such a radical nature that it becomes a permanent feature of the devotee's life or the Jnanin's, the man of knowledge—such realisation, *dvaitic* or *advaitc* or any other, can come suddenly or gradually growing into a sudden realisation. That need not be related to the Cosmic manifestation. Even when it is related to it, the tendency is to attach less and less importance and value to distinction leading more and more to the unitary Existence, i.e. Brahman, the Divine, the Self.

But if one pursues the path of Yoga, especially this Yoga (which does not exclude devotion and knowledge, on the contrary they become indispensable elements from the very beginning or at some stage) the development of the Yogin takes place in such a way that there is gradual unfoldment of the closed centres of consciousness which are linked to the planes above the material. For the dominant principles of these planes above the Earth, Life, Mind, and still higher and subtler and spiritual principles are already centred in the individual, asleep, half-awake, half-asleep, and by Yoga when they are opened, they can be switched on by practice to the corresponding planes proper. The Yogin's inner realisation of the Spirit, Self or the Divine grows towards the enrichment of the various parts of the

[1] पद्या योगविदां हृद्या तमःपारमहोदया।
सोपानक्रमसम्पन्नाऽऽरुरुक्षोरधिरोहिणी ॥४५॥

being taking their places in the Cosmic and universal plan, as they too learn to be real and realised parts of the whole, purposeful limbs of the ensouled spirit, instruments and focii of the Cosmic planes in the individual. Therefore it is stated that this ladder of planes is a passage pleasing, nay, indispensable to the Yogins. For each rung in the ladder represents a particular centre of the plane proper; and by ascending the ladder through the opening of these centres, one gradually reaches the summit. This is what is meant by the statement that this Yogic realisation is related at every step to the Cosmic manifestation. But such an opening of the centres, even though it may be possible without a radical spiritual realisation, cannot be of enduring value. For it is only against a spiritual background these realisations can endure, and their value and unfaltering functionings are assured only in the achievement of a stable and radical experience of the Spirit.

Through these centres opened the Yogin reaches the shore beyond Darkness where the hierarchy of planes begins. The Yogin who desires liberation from ignorance can arise and climb the ladder and need not wait till the dawn of the radical spiritual realisation which can come at any suitable stage. While the supreme importance of the radical experience of the soul in contact with the Divine within or the Divine in the Cosmic existence or the Divine as the origin and support of all manifestation is given its due place and fully recognised, the ascending order of progress towards the Divine at the head of the Cosmic existence is presented to the Yogin through the opened centres of consciousness linked to the rising planes from below upwards as has been already mentioned.

Now in concluding this topic on the hierarchy of planes, the next verse reiterates the real character, so as to avoid a possible misconception that the planes and worlds are outside the Supreme whence they start as the Cosmic movement.

46. This is the Consciousness of the Supreme Lord, shining as planes in order which everywhere vary in the measure of Force and quality and bulk.[1]

This is the concluding statement. Having dealt in the very beginning with the nature of the Consciousness with its inherent force of movement a reminder is made here that these planes, parts of the Cosmic movement are but formations of the Chit, rather the Chit-shakti, of the Supreme Lord himself. For the soul in ignorance, growing from the earth-

[1] चिदियं परमेशस्य कक्ष्याक्रमविभासिनी।
भिन्नशक्तिगुणा ह्येषा भिन्नमाना च सर्वतः॥४६॥

consciousness upwards beyond ignorance to the heights these planes are outside of itself, but the whole Cosmos with all the levels of Being dwells as grades and varied forms of and in the Consciousness of the Supreme Lord. And the very fact of the variety implies the difference in the structure and form and characteristics as well as in the size and shape and dimensions.

THE ORIGINAL PERSON SUPRAMENTAL

47. From the enjoyment of the Supreme Lord his gradual entry into the world commences in the world of Mahas, in the Vast of the Vijnana (Supermind).[1]

In the previous sections we have spoken of the seven planes and worlds of which *parārdha*, the triple Sat-chit-ananda forms the higher half, and is eternal. Now this verse states that the middle or the fourth plane from either end is the origin of creation. But it is not the result of an impersonal action, not a mechanical movement without a Will behind that springs from the Impersonal Being on the fourth plane, but the product of the workings of a Will-force from the Supreme Lord who presides over the Mahas world, in the vastness of the Supermind. It issues forth from the joy, the self-delight of the Lord—and all creation takes place, indeed, from an outflow of Ananda. Nor is this creation a sudden jump from the heights of the Mahas downward here, but a gradual descent and the Lord Himself —for nothing is there apart from Him—enters step by step into the creation as its Soul and substance, in the course of its manifestation from Him. "That itself gradually entered" says the Upanishad, *tadeva anuprāviśat*. To show that it is not a sudden jump and entry, *anu* is used significantly. It is not that the Lord in the Mahas vacates his abode in the Supermind and makes his entrance into the creation but something of him, a portion, *aṁśa*, a certain substantial aspect getting down into the creation is all that is meant here. For in the infinitude of his being, a ray is enough to create, enter, occupy and possess the whole Cosmic existence.

48. The original Person of ourselves who sustains the condition of Jiva (a living being) here, is the Supramental Self (Vijnana Atma) in the Mahas world wherein lies the control of this triple world.[2]

विज्ञानमयो मूलपुरुषः

[1] जगतोऽनुप्रवेशोऽयं निर्वेशात्परमेशितुः ।
महर्लोके समारब्धो विज्ञानमयभूमनि ॥४७॥

[2] अस्माकं मूलपुरुषो जीवत्वमिह बिभ्रताम् ।
विज्ञानात्मा महर्लोके त्रिलोकी यद्वशे स्थिता ॥४८॥

The Impersonality of the creative Being and movement is kept in the background and stress is laid on the Creative Person, the original Being and Self from whom all beings and selves here are born. For whatever may be the condition of the Jiva, the living being here, whatever the ignorance, limitations and bounded existence, the ultimate source and support is that One, the Supreme who sustains in his self-limiting power of being the conditions of the Jivas who therefore are the soul-forms of the Supreme Spirit. Even as the Jiva here is a spark or ray of the Supreme in the Mahas and is under his final control, so are the soul's triple instrument of matter, life and mind under the real control of their respective worlds of Matter, Life and Mind. And this triple world is of course subject to the control of the fourth world, Mahas, from which it derives its existence.

49. He is the treasure of all Knowledge and Action settled in the Mahas, which is the fourth plane, the middle one of the seven *Vyāhritis* (world-terms).[1]

The substance of this verse has been expounded already. It is stated here to show that the Supreme in the Supermind is not aloof from the activities in the lower triple world. For He is the head and at the head of all activity and knowledge. It is His active interest that is to be noted in the world-condition and the soul's movement and progress here. The next verse explicitly states that the many souls here are really the formations of the Supreme Spirit above.

50. Whose rays are the radical elements, the causes of our individualities with their activities determined, and it is they that manifest the Many in the form of Sutratman (subtle soul-forms).[2]

Indeed, the soul is never born, nor does it die. How then can it be said that the souls are formations of the One Spirit? It must be clearly understood that the soul as a spark of the spiritual Fire or a ray of the Sun is certainly unborn. But a spark on Earth growing into a flame heavenwards is certainly a form, rather a formation of the Spirit maintaining its relation with the world and sustaining itself with the experiences of the world-contact, assimilating at every step and turn the essence and meaning of Nature's interaction presented to it for the need of its growth ultimately towards the Supreme Spirit from which it has come down and with which

[1] एष क्रियाज्ञाननिधिर्महसि प्रतितिष्ठति ।
तुरीये धाम्नि सप्तानां व्याहृतीनां च मध्यमे ॥४९॥

[2] यस्यांशवोऽस्मद्व्यक्तीनां हेतवो मूलधातवः ।
सूत्रात्मरूपनानात्मव्यञ्जका नियतक्रियाः ॥५०॥

it is essentially one. The term soul, then, is used here not in its essential sense of the pure Spirit, but as a formation here of that Spirit which takes up the essentials of world-contacts and gradually develops in itself, in its being and nature, all the cosmic principles that go to build a more and more perfected individual Spirit, what we may call the soul-form, that can answer to the universal impacts correctly, discovering its right relation with the Cosmos and the Cosmic Spirit while still moving onward towards the Supreme station of the Spirit. Here what was stated in verse 20 must be noted. "And in His own portions that were previously released and are born, He manifests them as the Many." Also, therein the explanatory note adds: "The Supreme Lord manifests the sole Self as many selves. And where are they so manifested? In His own portions that were previously released and thrown as seeds in the world-system". Thus the distinction is clearly drawn between the unborn Spirit and the developing soul. The meaning of the soul's development is the great miracle of the Infinite Spirit revealing gradually in the finite soul-form itself with all that is natural to and inherent in it. Thus alone formation and progress of the soul from here towards the supreme finds its meaning and fulfilment. Now these souls are originally the Rays of the Supreme. They are said to be the radical elements that cause the individuation of the Spirit, the cause and meaning of the individuality; it is they from the Supreme that determine all activities of the soul-forms, that retain the thread of the soul-forms that reach down here from the Supreme. Hence they may be termed Sutra-atmans, subtle soul-forms.

51. Of the one Self many forms are manifested; hence each one of these forms is called Jiva by the Wise.[1]

Many selves or many souls are several forms of the Self; and these are the manifestations of that One. Each is called the *jiva*, the living soul as distinguished from *parama*, the supreme.

52. Here move about the beings, here the forms of the Lord of creation; the Radical part of every being is He on the fourth plane.[2]

The original and Real centre of every being here is the supreme Lord who retains the thread, as has been mentioned, of these beings in himself, in the fourth world, the Mahas.

53. Without break is the course of the supramental gaze of the

[1] एकस्यैवात्मनो नानारूपाण्याविष्कृतान्यतः।
एकैकमपि तद्रूपं जीव इत्युच्यते बुधैः॥५१॥

[2] विचरन्तीह भूतानि रूपाण्येव प्रजापतेः।
एकैकस्य च भूतस्य मूलांशः स तुरीयगः॥५२॥

World's Lord, whence are born and born the beings that are his forms.[1]

The remoteness of the fourth plane from here is no bar to the uninterrupted long glance of the world's Lord that is operative in every being that has come of him and has taken shape here; they are indeed his forms after all, and as such carry with them, something of Him, the essential Spirit round which their formations develop here.

54-55. That life-force (prana) which is required to sustain the gross body of the embodied being born on earth is active from the Bhuvarloka (life-world) through the modifications bearing on the body from desire of enjoyment.[2]

When we speak of formation and development, we imply that the spiritual spark or the soul takes in substance from the environment of its habitation and builds subtle sheaths and vehicles by which it can sustain itself here and traverse the planes of being. The soul in its essence is the spirit, and for its pure existence it does not require any support other than its Self, the Supreme, the Divine who is everywhere though his especial abode in relation to this Cosmic Manifestation is the Mahas world. But when that soul gets embodied here, the life-force that is necessary for its living is drawn by it from the life-world. Even as the substance of the material body is provided by the physical world, so the living force by which the body is enabled to be active is drawn from the vital world wherein is dominant the principle of enjoyment and possession of Matter for and over which it is incessantly active. But it must be understood that the life-force from the Life-world does not act on the material body in its purity but it is modified in its workings here on the material plane and body through perverse movements of desire for enjoyment and is certainly a disfiguration of the pure Prana, the Life-force.

56. Mind has for its object the triple world, is born of certain modification of the splendour of Swar-world; therefore earthly being, man, holds in him here the principles of knowledge and action.[3]

[1] अविच्छिन्ना दृष्टिधारा माहसी जगदीशितुः।
यतो भूतानि जायन्ते तद्रूपाणि पुनः पुनः ॥५३॥

[2] उत्पन्नस्येह भूलोके देहं स्थूलं शरीरिणः।
अत्र धारयितुं भूमौ यः प्राणः समपेक्षितः ॥५४॥
स भुवर्लोकतो देहमभिमान्य विकारतः।
बिभर्ति व्यापृतस्तत्र समाविष्टो बुभुक्षया ॥५५॥

[3] मनस्त्रिलोकविषयं स्ववैभवविकारजम्।
पुरुषो भूमिगस्तस्मादिह ज्ञानक्रियाधरः ॥५६॥

Similarly, the luminous principle of mind is active in the thinking life of the human being here; it does not function in its pristine purity, in its native splendour that belongs to the Mind-world, otherwise called Swar, the third term, *vyāhriti*. With all the perverse modifications consequent upon its entry into the embodied life of the soul here, it is still radically a luminous principle that is at work in man and represents the principle of Knowledge struggling in the Ignorance to outreach itself and grow into the heights and wideness of the Spirit of which it is the nearest instrument and vehicle here. Because of this luminous principle however limited, half-lit and stumbling it may be in its workings here, man on earth is endowed with thought that controls and directs his activities to an appreciable extent.

57. Just as the Life of the human being who walks here, with his small powers of intelligence is really of the life-world, even so the Mind in him is of the Swar world.[1]

The verse does not require elucidation. Suffice it to say that the three instruments of the Spirit here, matter, life and mind, really belong to the category of the three different worlds though they are intermingled, and seem to be one in the embodied being. After mentioning the real nature of the threefold instrument the text goes on to reiterate the fact that the progressive soul does not stop with the mind for its highest instrument.

58. Similarly his supramental living is in the Mahas where the Purushottama is,—He, who has become the Atman of all living beings.[2]

The soul developing the powers of the spirit in embodied being here still moves onward to what is above mind, to *Vijnāna*, Supermind. It can and has to manifest and organise that supreme spiritual principle for functioning in the Earth-life. Just as Life from the life-world entering into Matter makes it living and active, as Mind from the mind-world entering into living matter makes of it the thinking animal, man, the mental being in living matter, even so, the next higher principle *vijnāna*, supermind comes down from the Mahas world into the embodied soul for organised functioning in life. Hence it is stated that the supramental living of the soul is really rooted in the Supermind. And that is the Abode of the Supreme Spirit, Purushottama, the Self who is the original Soul and Self of all his becomings, all these beings here on Earth.

[1] भुवि सञ्चरतोऽस्येह पुरुषस्याल्पमेधसः।
प्राणो यथा भुवर्लोके स्वर्लोके च यथा मनः॥५७॥

[2] तयाऽस्य महसि प्रोक्ता विज्ञानमयजीवता।
यत्रास्ते सर्वजीवात्मभूतोऽसौ पुरुषोत्तमः॥५८॥

59. The primal source of us, the Jivas—is the supreme Transcendent; His shakti, the Mother supreme and transcendent, is the leader of the worlds.[1]

Indeed all the living beings, Jivas, have their source and root in the Supreme that transcends the triple world of Ignorance; and it is His power, Shakti that manifests Him and throws out the world-movement and hence She is said to be the Mother, creatrix and leader of the worlds.

60. The supreme Person presides over the world of Mahas, rich with the Glory of Tapas, himself directing the play of the Shakti suitable to (the condition of) what is to be governed.[2]

While the Supreme Spirit is inalienable from His Power and both are essentially One, the distinction must be made clear that it is He who is the Lord and it is His Glory that is brought out in the manifestation by His Shakti; and here again it is not to be supposed that He is passive and does not actively take part in the Cosmic Movement. For at every step taken forward by the Shakti, He is inseparable from it and closely follows or is behind it. Hence it is to be noted that He directs the whole play of His Power, Shakti. His directing the whole play of the Shakti according to the needs of every detail in the creative movement is the result of His immense capacity to control, limit and condition Himself in the finite, in the minutest detail and observe the Self-made law of the conditioned existence in its infinite variation. This is what is meant by 'suitable to the condition of what is to be governed'.

(to be continued)

T. V. KAPALI SASTRY

[1] जीवानामस्मदादीनामादिमूलं परात्परः।
लोकानामपि तच्छक्तिर्नेत्री माता परात्परा ॥५९॥

[2] ईशितव्यानुगुण्येन शक्तिमुल्लासयन्स्वयम्।
तपोवैभवसम्पन्नं महोऽध्यास्ते परः पुमान् ॥६०॥

REVIEWS

(I)

For Thinkers on Education. *By Swami Ramakrishnananda.* Published by the President, Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.

This is a collection of old essays and lectures, written and delivered before 1911, by the late Swami Ramakrishnananda. They were published piecemeal in various journals before, but have been collected now, for the first time in a single volume, "for thinkers on education".

The Swami was well-known in his days, not only as a high spiritual personality, but also as a deep thinker and a talented organiser. He was by no means a recluse and kept in touch with the life of the world in its various aspects. Sashi Maharaj was the name by which he was known to his friends and admirers who were very numerous indeed. He had received his initiation from the great Paramahansa himself and, as we are told in the publisher's introduction, "his whole life was a continuous act of devotion in the closest contact with the living ideal of his peerless Guru."

We have read the book not in a spirit of appraisement, but with a sincere regard for the saintly character and spiritual outlook of its author. As the publisher notes, "to the mere literary man the value of the writings is negligible," and we have no desire to examine their literary worth. Yet, at places we have come across passages, so direct and inspiring, that it has never occurred to us to complain of the absence of a catchy style.

Of the twenty-two writings collected in this book, only a few deal directly with the problem of education. Even these are devoid of any detailed consideration of the technique of education. They lay stress in a general way on the religious and ethical side of the training to be imparted to the young and emphasize the need of teaching them to eschew luxury and evil habits. We have no desire to minimise the value of abstinence and self-abnegation. Self-indulgence and incontinence are reprehensible as much in worldly life as in the life of an ascetic. But surely, it is possible to steer clear of both luxury and asceticism. When we speak of education, we have ordinarily in view a general training involving principally the moulding of the pupil's character—his moral character. It includes development of the intellect and, possibly, of the body. This is the usual significance of the word. But there are various lines of specialised education, various special courses of training. The training given to a soldier,

to a songster, to an artist, to a painter are included in these. Likewise there is a special course of training for the world-shunning ascetic. The ideals underlying these various lines of education are different. To the Moslem wine is forbidden, to the Sikh and Parsi tobacco, to the Vaishnav animal food. The educational institutions of these communities would naturally lay stress on these various taboos. Yet the very finest type of an Englishman drinks wine, smokes tobacco and eats meat, and does not suffer any moral or religious degradation thereby. Luxury, too, is a comparative term. What is an absolute necessity to one class, or one sect, is a reprehensible luxury to another. This is obvious when we compare the dwelling house, the furniture and fittings, the pots and pans, the food and dress of a European with those of the average Indian. The rigid puritan has always tabooed the pursuit of beauty as effiminate and ungodly. The child of an age of artistic culture has ever looked down on the fanatical purist as a boor. The Epicurean and the Stoic in human society have ever been at loggerheads. Where there is a common ideal of education to be found? We are mentioning all this because the revered author has laid great stress on the high ideal and the simple habits of old India. Our ideals and our habits are our own. Others are not bound to accept them. In fact, there is no reason why they should. Habits and ideals vary with the environment, they change from age to age; and it is just as well that they do so. Else the world would be a much poorer show than it is today in its infinite diversity. It is in the rich variety of this world stuff that we see the hand of the Master-weaver.

Against this background we have to study the problem of education. Schemes of training in their variety should reflect the variety of the aims that man is pursuing. Let us agree that self-control is a worthy ideal—at any rate, a worthier ideal than self-indulgence, which is an obstacle to sustained effort in any direction. We can easily make self-discipline and self-control the keynote of all true education. But how do we inculcate this discipline in the pupil? Surely not by force or constraint! "Spare the rod and spoil the child" is a discredited maxim. Do we then rely on gentle persuasion by the spoken word? Hardly! The process is something far more subtle—the mind of the pupil opens out under the influence of the teacher as the flower opens out in the warmth of the sun. It is through the nature of the pupil himself that the teacher leads him. What Sri Aurobindo has said about the spiritual precepter in his "Synthesis of Yoga" is very largely applicable to all true teachers. "The wise teacher will not seek to impose himself or his opinions on the passive acceptance of the receptive mind; he will throw in only what is productive and sure as a seed which will grow

under the divine fostering within. He will seek to awaken much more than to instruct....He will give a method as an aid...and not as an imperative formula." Precept, example and influence are the teacher's three instruments. Example is more potent than precept, and influence is more important than example. But these words are not to be taken in their external sense. Influence is not outward authority but the power of the teacher's contact, of his presence, of the proximity of his soul to the pupil's soul. True example, likewise, is not the example of the outward acts, not even that of the personal character. What is most important is the inner realisation of the teacher. He must realise that he is only an instrument, a representative, and is discharging a trust from above.

In his "The Human Cycle" Sri Aurobindo has, briefly but more directly, dealt with the question of mundane education. The new cultural outlook of the present age, he says, has begun to effect man's social life in many directions. This is indeed a hopeful sign. We see the new urge tackling the problem of the upbringing and education of children. Formerly, when man had not as yet definitely entered the rational stage of his growth, education ran along "evolutionary grooves of training", and concerned itself either with the production of well-defined types or with the development of men who would be loyal to social conventions, naturally no one took into account the temperament of their pupil. Today we are largely outgrowing this mentality. But still the idea persists that it is the teacher who is to mould the child. But the true fact is that every child is an evolving soul who, in the light of the spirit within, is to mould his character and life himself. The teacher's business is to aid the pupil to realise his inner self! Education has entered upon this new path and it augurs well for the future. A child thus brought up will, when he grows up, be able to remould society on the basis of his awakened soul.

We see, thus, that there is an intimate connection between education and spiritual realisation. That this fact was ever present in the mind of the saintly author of this book would be clear to even a casual reader. We would only lay stress on the fact that the spiritual is something more than the mere ethical and religious. Neither the religious nor the ethical ideal is of the whole world or of all time. If we aim at a secure and universal and eternal basis for education it can only be spiritual realisation. It is understood that neither the author nor ourselves are thinking here of education in the sense if vocational and technical training, very needful though they are to man's corporate life. Now are we emphasizing here the necessity of developing man's body along with his mind? The body is, as the ancient adage runs, our prime instrument in the performance of our duty (Dharma).

We are laying stress here on the realisation of our true self which presupposes a *mens sana in corpore sano*. This can only be achieved by a sound education, an all-round training of mind, life and body. The Swami, in these writings of his, has sought to place before his countrymen certain basic truths, and exhorted them "to act in these truths to give a higher value to life." It was indeed a noble task that he had undertaken and we have no doubt that he achieved a large measure of success in persuading his countrymen.

A great part of the book is really a call to the youth of India to resist the fatal fascination of Western civilisation and to hark back to the simple ways of their ancestors. We have nothing to urge against this call and should be satisfied with the remark that this kind of propaganda is but remotely connected with the problem of education. Not that we are blindly in love with the civilisation of Europe as such, but that we see much in our own sleepy world-shunning ways and escapist mentality that we must get rid of. Our education today must steer clear of two extremes, the ascetic's denial of the world and the materialist's denial of the Spirit. We need not make our life rude and bare in order to avoid luxury. Let us have self-control by all means, let us avoid self-indulgence, but repression and mortification will lead us nowhere. This is all that we need say in order to qualify the exhortation of this great Sannyasin. He had a clear idea of what education meant. He did not confuse it with book-learning but accepted his Master's words "I learn as long as I live." But, better than that, he knew full well that true education was intimately connected with the realisation of the Divine, who pervades all beings, all things, all acts, in fact all that there is. This is the knowledge that we all seek, and which all education wittingly or unwittingly, has for its goal.

C. C. DUTT

(II)

Authority and the Individual: THE REITH LECTURES FOR 1948-49 *By Bertrand Russell.* Published by Messrs. George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London.

Bertrand Russell, in the course of these lectures, has made a searching analysis of the predicament in which modern man finds himself. Written in a facile and lucid manner, the book exposes the utter hollowness of the present parliamentary system of government. The appearance of the book

it this time has a special significance for India, when the framers of her constitution seem to be betraying a woeful lack of creative vision.

They have neither listened to the voice of Sri Aurobindo, the greatest exponent of Indian culture, nor heeded to the warnings of such leaders of thought in Europe as Aldous Huxley and B. Russell.

After giving a detailed picture of the utter helplessness of the individual in modern centralised mammoth states Russell sounds a note of warning to us in India. Perhaps India would be making a contribution to world-peace and human unity, most far-reaching in its effects, if she led by her own ancient genius, cried halt to this unthinking acquiescence in the ways of the West.

Russell writes: "In those parts of the world in which industrialism is still young, the possibility of avoiding the horrors we have experienced still exists. India, for example, is traditionally a land of village communities. It would be a tragedy if this traditional way of life with all its evils were to be suddenly and violently exchanged for the greater evils of urban industrialism as they would apply to people whose standard of living is already pitifully low. Gandhi, realising these dangers, attempted to put the clock back by reviving handloom weaving throughout the continent." It is heartening to see how a man like Russell accustomed to voyages in the strange seas of thought, does not allow himself to be swept off his feet by forceful exaggerations of ideas when dealing with concrete realities as is customary with abstract thinkers. He is fully cognisant of the evils of the large scale industries, their deadening influence on the free growth of life and spirit, but he suggests the remedies which can secure to us all the advantages of the great victories of science without their accompanying evils. He does not suggest a remedy that will remove the patient along with the diseases like the one suggested by Mahatma Gandhi. About Mahatma Gandhi's de-mechanising programme he writes, "He was half right, but it is folly to reject the advantages that science gives us, instead they should be seized with eagerness and applied to increase the material wealth and, at the same time, to preserve those simple privileges of pure air, of status in a small community, of pride in responsibility and work well done, which are rarely possible for the worker in a large industrial town. The rivers of Himalayas should provide all the hydro-electric power that is needed for the gradual mechanisation of the village industries of India and for immeasurable improvement of physical well-being without either the obvious disaster of industrial slump or the more subtle loss and degradations which result when age-old traditions are too rudely broken."

Dr. Radha Kumud Mukerji wrote many years ago, "No form of provincia or central government which is organized merely from above, howeve mechanically and ideally perfect, can be a living and healthy growth unles it can draw its sustenance from the congenial subsoil of a people's politica instincts, habits and traditions as expressed in the indigenous local bodie the natural foundations of all governments."

Let us revert to the thesis of the book: "How can we combine the degre of individual initiations which is necessary for progress with the degre of social cohesion that is necessary for survival?" Too much centralisatio leads to stagnation and too much liberty of the individual leads to chao Russell is fully alive to the dangers of the complete liberty of the individua but then they should not be averted by a recourse to the peace of the grave Referring to the corporate life of the ants he says, "Up to a point we ma admire this unswerving devotion to public duty, but it has its drawback ants and bees do not produce great works of art, nor make scientific dis coveries or found religions teaching that all ants are sisters. Their socia life in fact, is mechanical, precise and static. We are willing tha human life shall have an element of turbulence if thereby we can escap such evolutionary stagnation." It is refreshing to study in the light c the above, what Sri Aurobindo wrote more than thirty years since: "A centralised world-state would signify the triumph of the idea of mechanica unity or rather uniformity. It would inevitably mean the undue depres sion of an indispensable element in the vigour of human life, and progress the free life of the individual, the variation of the peoples. It must enc if it becomes permanent and fulfills all its tendencies, either in a deat or in life a stagnation."

Further on Bertrand Russell traces the roots of our present jingoism t the life of the primitive man who had constantly to unite against force hostile to his existence. Now for Russell this instinct of hatred is an estab lished fact, something that *is*. It assumes varying forms—now I migh hate my competitor but then I might join hands with him and hate th foreigner who threatens to oust both of us. Rabid religious fanaticism give place to rabid nationalism and that in its turn to some such creed as Nazis or Sovietism, but what is unvarying behind all these forms is the instinc of hatred. Russell, true to his rational habit of thought suggests a solutio which envisages a mere adjustment among the different warring instinct of man. He has an astute and sharp intellect, a very clear insight into th nature of the physical, vital and mental make-up of human mind. Bu thus far and no further. He has neither a touch with the inmost soul, no a creative vision. He can never visualise a transcendence of human natur

much less its transformation into divine nature. For him the consummation of human evolution lies in its intellectual development, therefore he does not aim at uprooting these animal instincts that turn man's evolution into a hampered, chequered and tardy progress, but at gratifying them by less destructive means. This is not a reconciliation, but an adjustment, a compromise. He himself resorts to Crime Club novels for quelling his instinct of hatred. According to him the basis of the feeling of brotherhood is the instinct of uniting against a common enemy. He does not discern any spiritual light in the messages of Buddha or Christ and reduces them to the attempt, 'to extend to the whole human race the cooperative feeling that is spontaneous towards fellow-tribesmen.' Apart from the fact that Buddha and Christ never aimed at a solution based on such uncanny foundations, always precarious and unstable, the side-walks of history are strewn with the wrecks of such abortive attempts. As Sri Aurobindo aptly remarks, "A spiritual religion of humanity is the hope of the future. By this we do not mean what is ordinarily called a universal religion, a system, a thing of creed and intellectual belief....The inner Spirit is indeed one, but more than any other the spiritual life insists on freedom and variation in its self-expression and means of development. It means that oneness with our fellow-men will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of cooperation, but a deeper bortherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality, the realisation by the individual that only in the life of his fellow-men is his own life complete, the realisation by the race that only on the free and full life of the individual can its own perfection and happiness be founded."

Certainly the eternal basis of human unity is the unity of the Spirit that is manifesting itself in the universe. The realisation of this Spiritual Unity, which does not concede anything to the egoistic side of human nature, alone can be the foundation of human unity on earth. What is needed is, "A spiritual oneness creating a psychological oneness which would not depend upon intellectual or other uniformity and compelling a oneness of life which would not also depend on its mechanical means of unification." (Sri Aurobindo) It is significant that though Russell neither goes to the root of the problem, nor aspires for the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, he still visualises a pattern of State which will pave the way for the reign of the Spirit and lead humanity far towards its ultimate destination. Of course in human mental terms the problem appears to be as Russell has stated: "How can we combine that degree of individual initiative which is necessary for progress with the degree of social cohesion that is necessary for survival?" But Russell cannot be oblivious of the fact that both the

terms, 'initiative' and 'progress' require a good deal of elucidation. Indeed we cannot form a clear idea of progress without a deep insight into the meaning and sense of evolution, the goal and drift of human life. In his essay, 'Happiness in this Modern World,' Russell himself, while criticising the blind lust for Power that is characteristic of Western civilization says 'We take progress for granted', and then goes on to show that without inner progress all external progress is mere moonshine.

Now let us take 'initiative'. Russell tells us that life without initiative is mere stagnation, death. But why is it so? We admit without demur that initiation is the essence of the joy of life, but it is so only because true initiative means the coming into front, the growth of the human psyche the eternal spark of divinity, the source and inspiration of all our upward and forward endeavour, the creative *élan* that goads us to encounter and surmount even the most hazardous difficulties. And because Russell has not contacted with the soul therefore he does not anywhere state the reason why initiative is the breath of life. The fact is that initiative is necessary for progress, because initiative means the expression of the immanent divine and progress in the last resort signifies more and more manifestation of the Supreme Divine. That is the secret of evolution. The soul is the creative *élan* that takes delight in nothing but self-expression.

Hence the political or human problem is not merely a problem of adjustment as Russell thinks. Sri Aurobindo has beautifully stated the core of the problem in his 'A Defence of Indian Culture': "The problem which Indian culture had to solve was that of a firm outward basis on which to found the practical development of its spirit and idea in life—how to take the natural life of man and, while allowing it sufficient scope and variety yet to subject it to a law, canon, dharma, a law of function, a law of type, a law of each human tendency, a law too of highest ideal intention, and again to point that dharma towards its own exceeding by the fulfilment and cessation of its disciplinary purpose in the secure freedom of a spiritual living." That is in fact the core of the political problem, and Politics and Economics as Russell points out are mere means to the one end that is human progress. Ancient India had the instinct to form such a supple and plastic structure of society that her creative impulse was never exhausted and in every age she produced artists, poets, spiritual seekers and masters who always made bold adventures in the realm of the Spirit.

The realization on the part of such Western thinkers as Huxley and Russell that the modern Parliamentary system with its huge and unwieldy constituencies is a mere travestry of democracy and creates rather than bridges a wide gulf, augurs better for the future.

It is a patent fact that not to speak of the individual voter, even the indi-dual member of the legislature is voiceless and has always to toe the line. umanity will be ever grateful to Russell for tearing off the sanctimonious ısk worn by the present Parliamentary system in which the government said to be of the people, for the people and by the people. Russell shows w far a modern government is of the people and by the people. He ites, "Consider, for purposes of illustration, relation of an ordinary x-payer to an admiral. The tax-payers collectively, are the admiral's ıployers. Their agents in Parliament note his pay, and choose the govern-ent which sanctions the authority which appoints the admiral. But if e individual tax-payer were to attempt to assume towards the admiral e attitude of authority which is customary from employer to employee, would be soon put in his place. The admiral is a great man, accustomed exercising authority; the ordinary tax-payer is not. In a lesser degree e same sort of thing is true throughout the public services....The ordinary ter, so far from finding himself the source of all the power of army, navy, lice, and civil service, feels himself their humble subject, whose duty is, the Chinese used to say, 'to tremble and obey'. So long as democratic ntrol is remote and rare, while public administration is centralised and thority is delegated from the centre to the circumference, the individual ıpotence is difficult to avoid. And yet it must be avoided if democracy to be a reality in feeling and not merely in government machinery." The book is the ripe fruit of a mature mind. Some of the conclusions which he arrives are bound to form the corner-stone of the future.

About centralisation he writes: "Individual initiative is hemmed in :her by the State or by powerful corporations, and there is a great danger ıt this should produce, as in ancient Rome, a kind of listlessness and fatal-n that is disastrous to vigorous life. I am constantly receiving letters ying: "I see that the world is in a bad state, but what can one humble rson do? Life and property are at the mercy of a few individuals who ve the decision as to peace and war. Even where there is nominally mocracy, the part which one citizen can obtain in cotrolling policy is ually infinitesimal. Is it not perhaps better in such circumstances to rget public affairs and get as much enjoyment by the way as time permits?" "The sense of bold adventure, and of capacity to bring about results at are felt to be important, can only be restored if power can be delegated small groups in which the individual is not overwhelmed by mere ımbers."

If we studied the pattern of State in ancient India we would find that at alone could form the basis of a true reconciliation between individual

liberty and state control. "The ancient Indian village community has bee described as a little village republic, and the description is hardly e exaggeration, for each village was within its own limits autonomous and sel sufficient, governed by its own elected Panchayats and elected or heredita officers, satisfying its own needs, providing for its own education, Polic tribunals, all its economic necessities and functions, managing itself own life as an independent and self-governing unit. The villages carri on also their affairs with each other by combinations of various kinds an there were too groups of villages under elected or hereditary heads, an forming therefore, though in a less closely organised fashion, a natur body. But the townships in India were also in a hardly less striki way autonomous and self-governing bodies, ruled by their own Assemb and committees with an elective system and the use of the vote, managi their own affairs in their own right and sending like the villages th representative men to the general Assembly of the kingdom. The admin tration of these urban governments included all works contributing the material and other welfare of the citizens, police, judicial cases, pub works and the charge of sacred and public places, registration, the collecti of municipal taxes and all matters relating to trade, industry and commer If the village community can be described as a little village republic, t constitution of the townships can equally be described as larger urb republics. It is significant that the Naigama and Paura Assemblies the guild governments and the metropolitan bodies had the privilege striking coins of their own, a power otherwise exercised only by the mon chical heads of States and the republics". (Sri Aurobindo) The appearan of such a book from the pen of a thinker who is Western to the tips of fingers raises the hope that a new humanity will emerge from the synthe of East and West.

R. N. KHANNA

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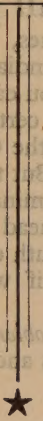

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